



BUSINESS PAGE 22
THE CO-OP BATTLE:
OLD LABOUR
VICTORIOUS

NEWS PAGE 3

AIDS: THE MORNING
AFTER
TREATMENT



TABLOID: 10 PAGES OF MUSIC
POP AND CLASSICAL

FIONA APPLE:
VISITED AT YOUR PERIL

The truth about health



Story behind Labour stunt

The NHS is what voters are talking about, while the parties trade insults and fantasy budgets. So what's the real outlook?

Steve Boggan

It was a simple Labour stunt designed to demonstrate Tony Blair's popularity with former Conservative voters - but behind it lay a truly devastating critique of the disintegration of the National Health Service.

The Labour leader was taken by his spin doctors yesterday to 69-year-old Elsie Butler's home to "canvass" her as a potential switcher. In fact, she had already decided to vote Labour but the untold story behind her change of allegiance will cause Tory strategists nightmares - she was angry at the appalling treatment meted out to her sick husband, Douglas.

Next Thursday, she says, is "payback time".

After Mr Blair had left her home in Morden, south London, unaware of her astonishing history, Mrs Butler told *The Independent* about the moment she lost faith in the Tories. For 30 years, she has been waging a battle against cancer, so has Mr Butler. They have each had their bowel and bladder removed. She has lost her womb and he has lost part of a lung.

Together, they have a unique view of three decades of NHS change. They say those 30 years represent a decline in patient care, culminating in Mrs Butler taking her husband from a filthy bed at the St Helier Hospital in Carshalton, south London - the hospital where John Major was born - to nurse him at home. "He had had his bladder removed and I saw him there in the hospital, lying in his own dirt, fading away and I vowed to get even," she said. "I felt like Dirty Harry with his Magnum 45. I wanted to point it at John Major and say 'Make my day'."

"Well now my day has come and it's payback time."

The Butlers describe the devotion of doctors and nurses at the Royal Marsden Hospital

and St Helier's as "magnificent". But they say cutbacks and the internal market have resulted in a deterioration of standards and apparent shortages in staff.

"I have voted Tory since 1979 but I don't believe the NHS will survive five more years of them," said Mrs Butler. "Things are getting worse. When I first started getting treatment, things were fine. But now there are mixed sex wards, not enough beds, dreadful shortages of nurses and appalling food."

"The treatment is so degrading. Can you imagine what it's like to be changing your tubes and things and turn round to find that there's a male patient there watching you on your ward? Why do we need mixed-sex wards?"

Mrs Butler began having doubts about voting Conservative after Mr Butler's bladder operation five years ago.

"I was appalled," she said. "He hadn't even been washed. He was lying there in his own dirt, with tubes everywhere and the nurses were simply too short staffed to care for him properly. He was fading away. It broke my heart. I had to clean him myself. I don't mind that, but I shouldn't have to."

Mr Butler, 69, a former BT engineer who has always voted Labour, said: "They lined up a place for me in a hospice and, basically, I was expected to die. But Elsie insisted on taking me home and nursed me back to health. I owe my life to her. There must be thousands of people like us all over the country. Well, now we plan to get our own back."

The couple are now healthy and optimistic, thanks, they say to their surgeon, Christopher Jones, although they say they are no longer sent hospital appointments - "They think we're past it," said Mr Butler.

Mrs Butler's decision to vote Labour was made only three months ago after being persuaded by her husband to attend a meeting at the Burn Bullock pub in Mitcham, where Tony Blair was addressing an audience of Tory waverers. "I gave him a hard time," she said. "But I emerged convinced. He's sincere and I think I can trust him. At least you know he believes in the NHS."

Obvious to the Butlers' trials, Mr Blair left after sharing tea and biscuits with other switchers. After his departure, there was little doubt that his commitment to the NHS was sincere. Questions remain, however, over whether Labour can afford it.

Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

Mr and Mrs Butler are not unique. Their experience of the health service is an example of the growing pressures on a system that is failing to cope. In spite of politicians' efforts to ignore it, the evidence from the doorsteps and from polling shows that the state of Britain's hospitals and medical services hounds the voters' concerns.

They have good reason to worry. The demands on an ageing population and medical advances are rising. But spending plans up to the millennium, on which both main parties agree, show virtual zero growth.

Waiting lists are rising and health authorities, short of cash, are arbitrarily restricting treatments.

The unequal provision of NHS care in different parts of the country is forcing patients to change their addresses in order to obtain the treatment that they need.

In the last week, *The Independent* has learned of a patient who has waited 13 months for heart surgery, of a cancer sufferer forced to rely on charity to pay for her drugs, a sick woman left for 14 hours on a trolley while doctors searched for a vacant bed and a multiple sclerosis sufferer who faces the prospect of moving to another part of the country to obtain the treatment that he needs.

Medical organisations say inequity is growing and the notion of the NHS providing equal care for all is a myth. They say rationing is inevitable and that with a fixed budget the



Leap of faith: The Butlers can only trust that Labour will deliver

Photograph: David Rose

The bigger picture

pressure to ration will grow. The parties refuse to accept the logic of the argument, insisting that with adequate funding rationing can be avoided.

Last week, nine medical charities wrote to the three main party leaders calling on the next Government to monitor the availability of treatments on the NHS and issue central guidance on which should be provided.

Peter Cury, chief executive of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, said: "The impact of ill health and disability is identical wherever people live but availability of treatments is all too often dictated by geography."

We believe the present lottery of care is totally unacceptable. While there must be limits on NHS resources, arbitrary rationing is not the way to manage them."

Variations in provision also affect routine services. Heart surgery rates vary threefold among districts and chemotherapy for cancer varies twofold.

Ken Judge, director of the policy institute at the Kings Fund, the health policy think tank, said: "Most people think we have a National Health Service, but what we actually have is 200 local health services. If resources are fixed and cost pressures increase, it is even

more important to distribute the available resources fairly. There must be more honesty and explicitness over what the NHS will provide."

Some analysts argue that Britain needs a "Bill of health rights", setting out what the public may expect from a publicly funded health service.

This ought to be preceded by a public debate on which elements should be considered part of the "core" service and which are optional extras.

The argument between the two main parties has focused not on these substantive issues but on the cost of running the NHS internal market, put by Labour at £1.5bn a year.

The Tories are sensitive to the charge and last year Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, ordered a 5-per-cent cut in management costs. Labour pledges to save £100m in the first year by reducing costs in the most over-managed authorities and trusts. Over the long term, Labour claims it can cut bureaucracy by 90 per cent. It says these savings will fund long-term growth in services.

Mr and Mrs Butler plan to vote Labour, to save the NHS. But the service needs a real increase of 3 per cent a year in funds, equivalent to £1bn, to meet rising demands. NHS managers say it is inconceivable that management savings will yield that sort of sum.

The future of the NHS rests on the tax-and-spending plans that neither Labour nor the Tories have the honesty to disclose prior to the election. That leaves voters, such as the Butlers, making a leap in the dark.

But who'll pay?

Diane Coyle
and Anthony Bevin

There is a hole in the government finances. It is the chasm between our wish to pay American-style taxes and our preference for a European-style welfare state.

The two main parties have both lashed themselves to each horn of this dilemma. The resulting pain need not be immediate; there is less danger of big tax rises in a budget in July or November than of the slow crumbling of key public services - such as health.

The Tories and Labour played a game of fantasy budgets yesterday. Would Labour have to raise £12bn to pay for employment schemes, and lower VAT on fuel? Or would the Tories have to find more than £15bn to abolish inheritance tax and boost Britain's cadet forces?

It was a bitter row, with John Major plainly accusing Tony Blair of lying. But it is the kind of row you have with your husband over how to spend your lottery winnings when you never even buy a ticket.

Yesterday's political pantomime coincided with a fresh call from business for higher taxes. The British Chamber of Commerce said the penny cut in the basic rate of tax that has just come into effect should be

reversed. David Richardson, its president, said: "The last thing any government should ever do if it is trying to manage the economy effectively is to box itself in in this way."

But they are boxed in. All of the dividend from the strong economic growth expected this year and next will be needed to close the excessive gap between tax revenues and government spending. The reduction in borrowing will also depend on meeting the ultra-tough spending targets accepted by both Labour and Conservatives. As the Institute for Fiscal Studies has pointed out, the planned growth in expenditure in the next three years is lower by far than the average rise during any parliament of the past 80 years.

The menu of options for a government that wanted to raise more revenues without increasing income tax rates is long. It includes higher taxes on companies, cutting or axing tax reliefs like mortgage interest relief and increasing VAT.

Andrew Dilnot, director of the IFS, said that the crunch would come in a few years' time, with - yes - the National Health Service being the main pressure point. But by then the gap between the kind of health service we want and the kind we find ourselves living with might be too big to close.

You listen

Quickly, words, phrases and expressions become familiar to you.

You repeat

You'll make rapid progress and your confidence will increase.

You understand

In 3 months, you could be confidently speaking your chosen language.

FREE

A free Personal Stereo can be yours when you order within 28 days.

0800 282 417

24 hour personal advisory service

Tick the language you want to speak in 3 months' time.

<input type="checkbox"/> French	<input type="checkbox"/> German	<input type="checkbox"/> Italian	<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish
<input type="checkbox"/> Japanese	<input type="checkbox"/> Russian	<input type="checkbox"/> Polish	<input type="checkbox"/> Swedish
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Greek	<input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese	<input type="checkbox"/> Thai
<input type="checkbox"/> Danish	<input type="checkbox"/> Hindi	<input type="checkbox"/> Korean	<input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese
<input type="checkbox"/> Dutch	<input type="checkbox"/> Malay	<input type="checkbox"/> Persian	<input type="checkbox"/> Welsh

Please send me my FREE demonstration cassette and information pack. (D9773)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post today to: Linguaphone, Freeport, London W16 6JL. No stamp required.

LINGUAPHONE

THE BROADSHEET

Business & City	22-26
Comment	19-21
Election 97	9-13
Foreign News	14-17

Home News	2-8
Leaders & Letters	19
Obituaries	18
Shares	25
Sport	27-30

THE TABLOID

Architecture	6,7
Arts Reviews	19
Classical Music	16-18
Crossword	22

Listings	20,21
Management	17
Radio & TV	23,24
Rock music	10-14
Weather	22



APR 25 1997

news

significant shorts

Police question youth over nine-year-old's car death

Police were yesterday questioning a 16-year-old youth after a 9-year-old girl was knocked down and killed by a stolen car. Teleri Bethan West died instantly when the blue Vauxhall Nova struck her after mounting the pavement opposite her home at Morgantown, near Cardiff, on Wednesday night. Sean Rogers, 14, a neighbour who was with her, suffered serious leg and pelvic injuries, and was detained in Cardiff Royal Infirmary.

Officers said the arrested driver of the car later failed a breath test, and a youth was being questioned at Fairwater police station in the city. A police spokeswoman said: "We need to speak to any witnesses of this very tragic accident. We are particularly anxious to trace the occupants of a maroon-coloured car which was in the vicinity."

Two life sentences for twins' killer

A double killer was given two life sentences at the Old Bailey yesterday for the brutal murder of identical twin brothers whose battered bodies were found floating in a canal. David Dillon told a friend that Christopher and Anthony Langford had gone for "a long swim" after he bludgeoned them to death in an apparently motiveless attack. He wheeled their bodies through the streets in a shopping trolley before dumping them in the Regents Canal in north London. The 38-year-old twins, who lived on the streets of the capital, were the sons of a retired teacher and came from Bedfordshire, the court heard. Dillon, 38, an unemployed decorator, originally from County Cork, had denied murdering the brothers between February and April last year.

£175,000 damages to pop designer

A former fashion designer who dressed rock stars David Bowie and Gary Glitter was yesterday awarded £175,000 agreed damages for the carbon-monoxide poisoning that devastated his life.

Allan McRae, 46, who once worked with top couturier Norman Hartnell, was exposed to the fumes over a 14-year period in his council studio flat in Islington, north London. He said resulting health problems caused his business to fail in 1983. Ten years later, he was made redundant from a teaching post and remains unemployed, the High Court was told. Doctors have diagnosed frontal-lobe brain damage, which affects memory.

In December 1992, Mr McRae reported a faulty gas fire to the London Borough of Camden, from whom he let the flat in 1979. It was finally disconnected in February 1993. A spokesman for the borough said: "We accept that ultimate responsibility lies with the council", and added that in the past 18 months, rigorous checks on gas appliances had been carried out in nearly 30,000 homes.

Animal magic at pet awards



Animal-mad celebrities mingled with heroic pets and their proud owners at the pet world's answer to the Oscars yesterday as hundreds of animal lovers turned out for the 1997 WAG Awards at the Intercontinental Hotel in London.

Among the pet-struck stars present were Jilly Cooper, the best-selling novelist, who picked up the personality of the year award in recognition of her lifetime support for animal welfare; Johnny Morris, the former presenter of *Animal Magic* and the Channel 4 racing presenter, John McCrick. The ceremony, hosted by Liza Goddard, and organised by animal insurers Pet Plan and the Animal Health Trust charity, paid tribute to outstanding bravery and talent among Britain's pets. Shandy, an 11-year-old golden retriever from Feltham, won the dog's award for twice saving his owner's life, and Solomon, a two-year-old British Blue cat from Dorset, took the feline prize for rescuing and protecting broods of tiny house martins whose nest had collapsed.

When is a wedding not a wedding?

Around 25 Irish couples have been affected by a legal loophole which has left their church marriages invalid.

The problem, which could undermine family succession rights, arose from new family legislation aimed at harmonising church and state marriages. Last year, for the first time, the state stipulated that couples must notify state registrars three months in advance of their intention to marry. The instruction's purpose is to ensure that couples reflect on their decision to marry, and so reduce the numbers of hasty unions breaking down. Newly passed legal amendments will retrospectively validate the status of 84 couples who believed they had notified registrars correctly before marriages. But 25 other couples will have no option but to go down the aisle again because they were in such a rush they neglected to give any notice at all.

Alan Murdoch

School's drive for a new teacher

An overcrowded village school is to raffie a car to pay for a new teacher, after budget cuts forced governors to lose one member of staff last year. The cuts, at Kirkburton Church of England First School, near Huddersfield, forced the 105 pupils to study in three classes of 35. Joyce Worsfold, the head teacher, said a fourth full-time teacher would enable her to reduce class sizes and so improve children's education. Now the school hopes to raise £20,000 by selling 20,000 tickets at £1 each, with a prize of a brand new Citroën AX car. The school is buying the £8,500 car from a local dealership at a cut-price £5,000, mostly raised through donations from local businesses.

Lucy Ward

people



Reach for the sky: American Linda Finch sets off yesterday from London, on a round-the-world flight in tribute to the aviation pioneer Amelia Earhart.

Woman who lied about age is the world's oldest mother

A 63-year-old California woman who lied about her age to receive *in vitro* fertilisation treatment has become the world's oldest mother, after giving birth to a healthy girl last year, it was revealed yesterday.

Her case reopened the debate over so-called "test tube granny mums" but British fertility experts yesterday warned that to deny treatment solely on the grounds of age was "neither possible or desirable".

In this case, the woman, who has not been named, was well past menopause and became pregnant with an egg donated by another woman, but fertilised with her 60-year-old husband's sperm. She gave birth last November to a 6lb 2oz girl by Caesarian section and then breast-fed the infant.

The woman, a Filipino-American, deceived the clinic even though it put her through rigorous physical check. In a statement, the clinic added: "Had the individual disclosed her actual age she would not have qualified for treatment, since the programme uses an arbitrary upper age limit of 55." Before her, the oldest mother record was held by an Italian, who was only a few months younger at 62 when she gave birth in 1994.

While menopause denies women the ability to conceive naturally from their own eggs, it would seem that for as long as they are physically strong and they have a healthy uterus, they can have a child from an egg fertilised *in vitro*.

A spokeswoman for the British Medical Association said patients should not be denied treatment on the grounds of age or sex, but the best interests of the child should be paramount.

Dr Richard Nicholson, editor of the *Bulletin of Medical Ethics* said that if a woman gave birth at 63 "there [is] considerable likelihood one or other parent will die while the child is still in the teenage years".

In the past the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority has said that, in general, women in their fifties should not be given treatment because of the difficulties children would face. But Susan Ficca, chief executive of the national fertility association, said yesterday: "Chronological age is not an indication of physical age or condition and it is not possible or desirable to make hard and fast rules saying people over a certain age cannot be treated."

David Usborne and Glenda Cooper

IRA Maze escaper back behind bars

An IRA fugitive who escaped from Northern Ireland's Maze prison in a mass breakout 14 years ago was back behind bars in Dublin last night after being detained by Irish police serving an extradition warrant. Dermot McNally, 39 (right), was arrested at his home in Sligo early yesterday by Gardaí acting on 14 extradition warrants supplied by the RUC.

McNally, 39, from County Armagh, was serving a life sentence for causing explosions when he escaped with 37 other IRA members in September, 1983.

Most of the Maze escapees were rearrested near the jail, but 19 got away from the area.

McNally appeared before Dublin District Court yesterday afternoon. The father-of-two, wearing a green jacket, cream shirt and jeans, arrived at the court amid high security at 4pm.

Police sergeant Michael Heffernan told the court he arrested McNally at 6.15am. He said he had asked the man who answered the door if he was Dermot McNally and the man replied: "That's me."

Sgt Heffernan said the warrants related to making bombs, possession of bombs and bomb-making equipment, causing explosions, possession of firearms and one count of wounding with intent to commit grievous bodily harm.



In addition, the warrants alleged McNally had been sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for the various offences and that he unlawfully escaped from custody on September 23, 1983.

McNally had been living openly in Sligo after court rulings in the Republic that prevented the extradition of other Maze escapees.

In March, 1990, the Republic's Supreme Court refused to extradite the two of the escapees - Dermot Finucane and James Pius Clarke - on the grounds that their offences were political.

McNally, originally from Lurgan, in Co Armagh, was jailed for life in 1977 for causing explosions.

He was given three life sentences for bombing a wine lodge, a post office and a railway station.

Woman sues over love-cheat Romeo

A dating agency is being sued by one of its clients, after it fixed her up with a married man. Divorced Margaret Ruddlesden, 47 wrote "lying bastard" on Alwyn Phillips' underpants and thrust his clothes into the hands of his wife when she realised.

Ms Ruddlesden had paid £417 to join Close Encounters (of the Best Kind) after moving to Bristol and was soon in the arms of Mr Phillips, 47, who worked in a frozen food depot.

But the affair was swiftly curtailed when she realised he was living with his wife, Theresa.

Yesterday, Ms Ruddlesden told the *Western Daily Press*: "Alwyn's car was parked outside my house when someone crashed into the back of it. The police turned up and Alwyn had to give his details. From that moment on his attitude changed."

"Until then it had been red roses and chocolates and he even asked me to marry him. But after the accident he didn't ring for days. I knew something was wrong."

When she went to his home his wife answered the door. The next day he finally phoned and agreed to meet her to collect some of his clothes. "I was enraged. I stuffed labels in the back of his pants, then I wrote 'lying bastard' on the back of them."

The agency has now offered to return the introduction fee.

briefing

EDUCATION

Number of college students continues to increase

The number of students in further education colleges rose this year, for the third year running, to just under 2.5 million, according to figures released yesterday. Data from the Further Education Funding Council shows that sixth-form colleges, with 154,000 students in 1996-7, are among the institutions with the biggest increase. The colleges, which often have a strong academic reputation and score highly in exam league tables, attracted 11 per cent more students than last year.

The number of older people enrolling in colleges has also contributed to the rise in overall numbers, with an 11 per cent rise in those aged 60 and above returning to learning.

The trend reflects colleges' attempts to seek out new student markets among adults in order to hit government-set recruitment targets amid tough competition with schools for sixth-form age students.

Further education students were this year studying for 3.6 million qualifications, a fifth of them A-levels. Second most popular were GCSEs, followed by the government's National Vocational Qualifications, which test competence in particular trades and skills.

TECHNOLOGY

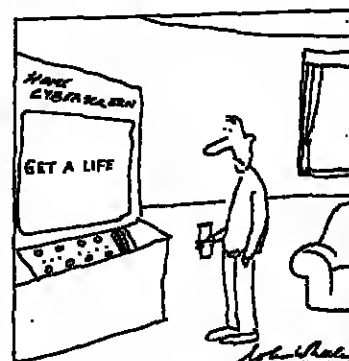
Home of the future unveiled

Computer giants IBM, Intel, Compaq and Hewlett-Packard have put a lot of thought into making people think less in the cyberhome of 2000. Their house of the future, unveiled this week at San Francisco's Blaisdell Gallery, features a range of gadgets, from electronic butlers to computerised grocery lists, designed to ease the stresses of modern life.

A 42-inch flat-panel screen in the living room, showing the film *Blade Runner*, uses no cathode ray tube, and no enormous box; just a huge picture on a thin screen, priced at \$20,000.

Intel's Car-PC, meanwhile, is loaded with software that recognizes your voice. Give the word "radio" and it tunes in. Say "phone" and it dials a number. And when away from the house, IBM's prototype video doorbell is your butler. Ring the bell and a voice booms out: "No one's home, but leave a video message."

In the kitchen, the Cyberhome 2000 has a special scanner. Run it over a packaging bar code, and information pops up on a screen. The scanner tells you how long it will take to heat the food and even sets the microwave. It can also connect you to the food manufacturer's Web site, to pick up recipes online. If it's your last can or packet, the system reminds you.



HEALTH

Breakthrough for arthritis treatment

A pioneering inflammation therapy offers new hope for sufferers of rheumatoid arthritis, it was announced yesterday. Researchers from 11 European countries, led by Barry Bresnihan, Professor of Rheumatology at University College, Dublin, have developed a naturally occurring chemical messenger made by the body so that it can be used as a treatment.

The chemical, Interleukin-1ra (IL-1ra), regulates another messenger, IL-1, which promotes inflammation and the destruction of cartilage and bone.

A six-month trial has now been completed involving 472 arthritis sufferers at 41 hospitals in 11 countries. They were split up into groups and given different amounts of IL-1ra.

Those given the maximum 150mg-a-day dose showed a significant improvement over the placebo group at 24 weeks. In addition they experienced a slowing in the rate of damage to the joints. The trial was continued for a further six months and improvement was maintained throughout the one-year follow-up period. No important adverse effects were reported.

The findings were reported at the annual meeting of the British Society for Rheumatology in Harrogate.

IMMIGRATION

Limited citizenship for 200,000

More than 200,000 people living in Hong Kong were granted a limited form of British citizenship last year in the run up to China taking control of the colony. The Hong Kong residents have obtained British Dependent Territories citizenship, which entitles them to visit the UK without a visa and offers them British consular protection in other countries.

An additional 5,511 were given full British citizenship last year. The huge influx - just 29,000 people from Hong Kong gained part citizenship in 1995 - reflects fears of Chinese repression.

In total, the number of people granted British citizenship, excluding those from Hong Kong, rose to 43,000 in 1996, a slight increase on the previous year.

Persons Granted British Citizenship, 1996, Home Office research directorate, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT

Jason Bennetto

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	£34.00	Italy	£15.00
Belgium	£18.00	Japan	£14.50
Canada	£20.00	Malaysia	£14.50
Czech Rep.	£12.00	Norway	£14.50
Denmark	£12.00	Sweden	£14.50
France	£14.00	Switzerland	£14.50
Germany	£14.00	USA	£14.50
Greece	£14.00		
Spain	£14.00		
Sweden	£14.00		
Switzerland	£14.00		
USA	£14.00		

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS

By mail, 12 issues: Europe £10.75; Zone 2 (Middle East, Africa, Asia and Australasia) £14.00; Zone 3 (USA, Canada and Australasia) £20.00. To order, please send cheque payable to Johnstone International Media Services Ltd or to Johnstone International Media Services Ltd, 538-539, Chesham Road, Chesham, Bucks HP80 1JH. Tel: 0494 414141. Fax: 0494 414142. Email: jims@compuserve.com

BACK ISSUES

Back issues of the Independent are available from: Historic Newspapers, Telephone 01938 543371.

APEX FARES TO CALAIS. GOING FAST.

£109 STANDARD APEX RETURN CAR + 5 DOVER - CALAIS

Only the Hovercraft can fly you across the channel to Calais in 35 minutes without breaking the bank. No lorries or coaches means no queues. So you'll be on board and off on your holiday in no time, enjoying our airline style cabin service and the unique experience of travelling to France on a cushion of air.

HOVER SPEED
FAST FERRIES

<http://www.hover-speed.co.uk>

*Commences mid June.

Bookings must be made 14 days in advance of travel. There is a £20 charge for amendments and a 50% cancellation fee applies. Limited seats subject to availability. £109 Apex fare valid 30th April.

CALL RESERVATIONS **0990 240 241**

Still the fastest way to France

The new SuperSeaCat, the latest in fast ferry technology, and the Hovercraft give you 17 departures daily, Dover-Calais, in peak season. This special Apex offer must be booked by April 30th. So call Hoverspeed or your travel agent today.

مكتبة من الأهل

Morning-after drug could stop Aids

Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

A "morning after" treatment for people exposed to the Aids virus, HIV, is proving successful in preventing them becoming infected, doctors say. The treatment - the same cocktail of drugs used to treat people with established HIV - can reduce the chances of infection by 80 per cent if given immediately after exposure to the virus.

Because the role of the drugs as a preventive measure has been concealed in case it encouraged unsafe sex and triggered a rush for expensive drugs - some doctors have claimed that the treatment is not being made available to that need it.

Studies have shown that in pregnant women with HIV and people jabbed with contaminated needles, antiviral drugs given promptly can stop transmission of the disease, either to the baby or the injured person. Scientists believe that prophylactic treatment following unprotected intercourse with an

HIV-infected person can also restrict transmission, although no studies have been done. AZT, the Aids drug can reduce the risk of transmission to the baby from 26 per cent to 8 per cent when given to pregnant women with HIV before and during delivery, and to the infant for six weeks after birth. In people jabbed with used needles, AZT treatment for three to four weeks afterwards reduces the risk of infection by 80 per cent. Guidelines in the US recommend that health workers

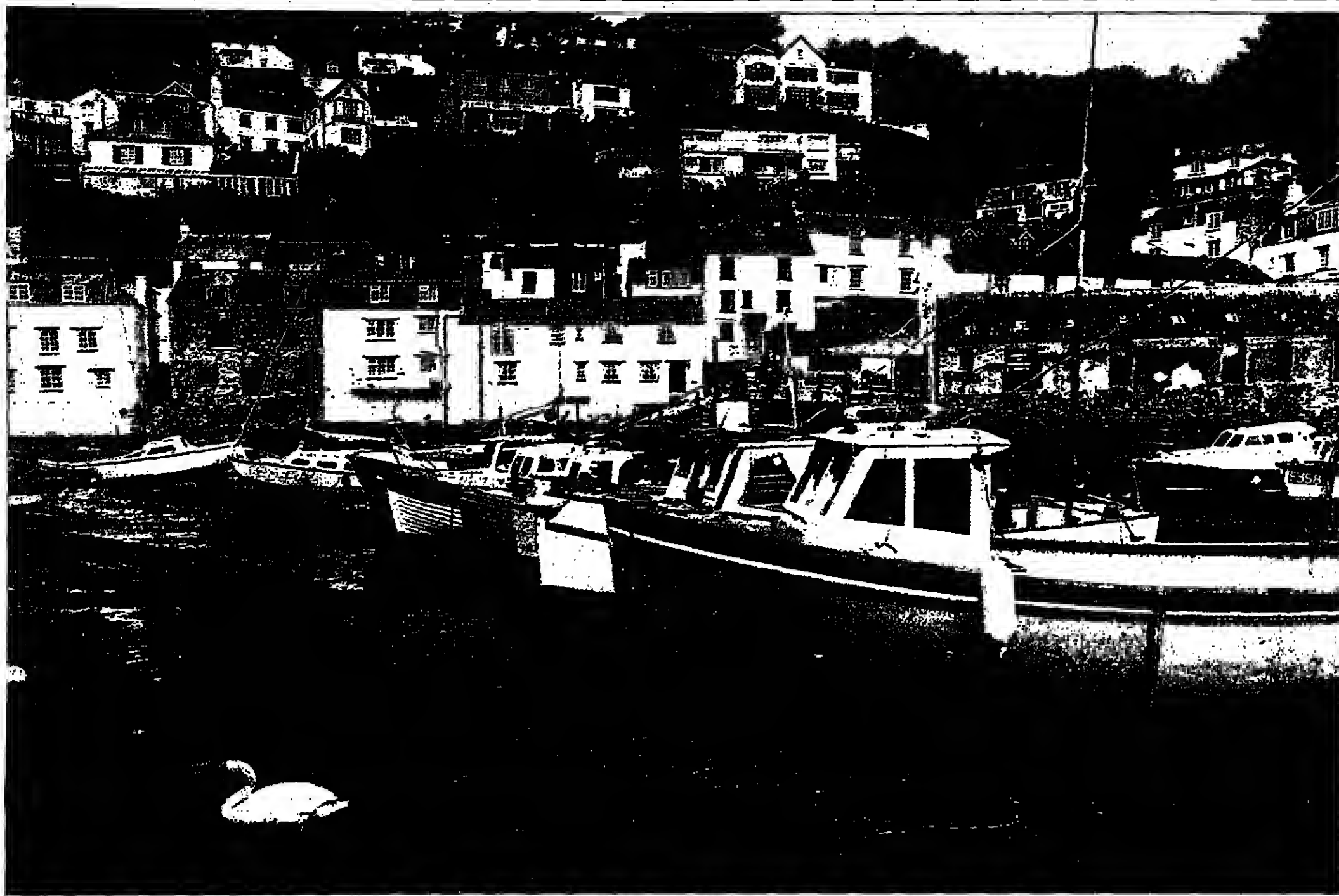
who suffer needlestick injuries should be treated with a cocktail of three drugs for four weeks afterwards. A review of Aids drugs in the *Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin*, a guide for doctors published by the Consumers' Association, says prophylactic treatment should be offered to HIV-infected pregnant women to prevent infection of their babies and to people injured by contaminated needles. But it says there is no agreement on whether people should get it after unsafe sex.

Dr Joe Collier, editor of the *Bulletin*, said: "Prophylactic treatment after unsafe sex should be thought through carefully and shouldn't be overlooked. There are unusual circumstances - such as rape - where it could be appropriate but people don't know about it." Some doctors in the UK had already prescribed the drugs to patients after risky sex and a study of their efficacy as a preventive measure following unprotected intercourse was beginning in San Francisco, Dr

Collier said. "If you get a scratch with an infected needle it is crucial you get down to a clinic quickly and get treatment. It can reduce the incidence a lot. The same is true for HIV-infected pregnant women." For people exposed to the virus through sex, it is more difficult. Aids doctors don't want people phoning up every morning after they have had unsafe sex. That is an abuse of the arrangements when they should be wearing condoms or having safe sex.

Professor Michael Adler, head of the Aids clinic at University College Hospital, London, said most hospitals now had a policy of treating pregnant women and health workers who suffered needlestick injuries but there was concern at the development of a "morning after" mentality in relation to sex. "These drugs are toxic and four weeks' treatment costs £600. If people feel there is a morning after pill and they don't have to have safe sex it sends the wrong message."

■ The Aids virus is becoming more aggressive and dangerous, causing recently infected people to become ill faster, according to a study. Doctors in Italy who studied 285 patients infected between 1985 and 1995 found that those infected during the past six years were more likely to have immune system cells knocked out by the virus, and developed Aids more quickly. However, British experts said they had seen no similar change in the course of the disease in the UK.



Blue Water, white death: Freddie the Swan cruising in Polperro harbour, where locals have been watching in horror as he murders scores of local ducklings

Photograph: Apex

Murder, mayhem and a Swan called Freddie

Mark Rowe

It is a tale of murder, intrigue and dark threats. The Cornish fishing village of Polperro, population 1,585, has been split down the middle by its resident swan called Freddie.

Freddie, after the fashion of his Hollywood namesake Mr Kruger, has created a nightmare on Polperro Street.

A territorial creature at the best of times, the cob swan has reacted to his mate, Phreda, coming into season by killing ducklings in the village harbour to make sure any bread available goes to his own offspring. Last weekend he is said to have maimed and then drowned 12 ducklings.

In a dramatic escalation of the feud between the pro-duck and pro-swan factions, dead ducklings have been pushed through the letter box of the Three Pilchards public house, whose landlord has been accused of being pro-swan.

This prompted the licensee, Andy Puckey, to put a poster on his front door that read: "Latest score: Swan 6 Ducks 0. And will the secret postman/woman have the courage to reveal themselves? I doubt it!!!!" Police from Looe were called in to remove the poster because they were concerned it might cause a breach of public order. They reprimanded a teenage boy for the duckling deliveries but took no further action.

Mr Puckey admitted that he used to be pro-swan but says he now wants to see them go as much as anyone.

"It's for their own safety really because one of these nights that cob is going to end up dead," he said.

Some residents who have decided enough is enough took to the water last week during one of Freddie's frenzies to stop the slaughter. Monica Field-Johnson said: "I went out in a small boat and was trying to put him off by bashing him over the head with a plastic paddle. But it was like hitting a warship with a dingbat."

"It's most unpleasant. He grabs the ducklings as they come bobbing down the river, throws them in the

air and drowns them. You find dismembered ducklings all over the harbour. It makes the children cry."

"He is a particularly butch and macho swan and has got to be removed by legal means otherwise somebody is going to take the law into their own hands."

Harbour trustee, pro-duck Graham Jolliffe said those who wanted the swan to stay saw the swans as substitute children. "There are lots of old dears who have adopted the swan because their children have left home and they have no pets."

"But this harbour is no place for swans. When young swans are learning to fly they have the problem of all the wires round the harbour. They go straight into the

chimneys and we are forever picking them up when they are injured."

A spokesman for Devon and Cornwall police said: "It has split the community down the middle. Our only concern is for public order and that the birds are not harmed in any way. We can't actually arrest the swan for murder."

For most of the 10 years he has been in the village Freddie adopted a less militant approach towards his feathered neighbours and was a village favourite. Residents even clubbed together to buy a raft for him to nest on.

But as Freddie and Phreda feasted on the bread provided by well-meaning villagers, ducks were attracted to the free meals on offer

and that is when the feathers started flying.

The problem is that Polperro harbour has no natural food source, such as mud flats or grass, so the swans are dependent on the goodwill of villagers and will fight anything that may threaten their food.

Two years ago, Freddie killed around 80 ducklings, prompting some villagers to spray him with washing-up liquid.

The RSPCA said it had no plan to remove Freddie and Phreda. "The swan is doing what comes naturally and is defending the food for its own offspring," said spokeswoman Julie Briggs. "We would seek to prosecute anyone caught spraying him with detergent."

Enigma of Elgar's missing festival music

Classical music fans have reacted with shock to the news that a festival organised in memory of Edward Elgar will not feature any of his music.

Some members of the Elgar Society are upset that this year's Malvern Elgar Festival will incorporate the work of Schubert and Brahms, but not the man after whom the event is named.

The organisers say they made the unusual move because the annual festival has been switched from a large concert hall, which is being refurbished, to a church which is unsuitable for Elgar's compositions.

Artistic director William Boughton confirmed that a committee had decided to ditch Elgar's works in favour of Continental composers for the event held in Malvern, Worcestershire, from 27 May to 7 June.

John Harcup, a society member, said he could understand why the Priory Church's limited capacity meant that Elgar's most famous works were unsuitable, but thought lesser-known pieces should be performed. "I don't see how one can have an Elgar Festival with no Elgar," he said. "It is daft to call it an Elgar Festival when there is no Elgar. It's quite unbelievable. Elgar got engaged in Malvern and if he was still alive I think he would be very upset."

Mr Harcup said the change to a smaller venue should have been an opportunity for organisers to line up the composer's lesser-known works, such as his church music, which would be perfect for the venue.

But Mr Boughton, the artistic director at the centre of the controversy, said that Elgar's larger works, such as *Dream of Gerontius*, could not be performed for financial reasons and because of poor acoustics. "Including his minor works would be just tokenism," he said. "It would be disrespectful both to Elgar and the audiences to put in a few little pieces of his just to placate people. The arts are not about placating people - they are about stimulating people."

The event was to have been staged at the town's Winter Gardens, where, Mr Boughton said, Elgar's music will definitely be heard next year. "I can assure people Elgar will be back in '98. The reasons for this are artistic and financial. I am sorry they are not having their beloved Elgar, but I have too much respect for him and his music to reduce him to a token."

Hywel Davies, secretary of the 250-strong West Midlands branch of the society, said: "One understands that a few people are upset about this. It's a shame, but I think it's out of our control."

"You can't expect someone to put on a concert and lose money, but our society will live through it; we are a broad church."

Travel light.



THE INTEL INSIDE LOGO AND PENTIUM ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS AND MMX IS A TRADEMARK OF THE INTEL CORPORATION.

For further information please contact: FUJITSU EXPRESS RESPONSE CENTRE, FREEPOST BD2715, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 1BR Tel: 0345 023 985 Fax: 01756 702 856

Name _____ Surname _____ Job Title _____
 Company Name/Address _____
 Post Code _____ Tel No _____ Fax No _____

Call us anytime
 on
0345 023 985
 or visit www.fujitsu-computers.com

Weighing just 1.9 kg and only 28 mm deep, the Fujitsu LifeBook™ 600 Series is one of the lightest, thinnest ultraportables around.

Clip it together with the multimedia enhancement unit - complete with 8 x CD-ROM and floppy disk drive - and you've got the power to go anywhere.

Fujitsu
 LifeBook™ 655 TS
 150 MHz Intel Pentium® processor with MMX™ Technology
 32 MB EDO RAM
 256 KB cache
 2 MB VRAM
 2 x PCMCIA type II slots
 Zoomed video
 Lithium Ion battery
 RoadOffice
 TeamCrypto
 Optional multimedia enhancement unit
 LIFEBOOK

FUJITSU

PCs • NOTEBOOKS • SERVERS

news

Bungles stop EU aid going to poorest

Sarah Helm
Brussels

Large amounts of Britain's £1.5bn share of EU regional-aid money have been directed by the Government towards its favoured projects, while failing to ensure that funds reach the needy in Britain's poorest areas, according to European Parliament figures.

Delays and bungles by government administrators in distributing funds caused debt and even bankruptcy among bodies such as colleges and voluntary groups as they waited for their cash. The report also discloses that Britain's public utilities have been fattened up with £450m of regional-aid money, before and after privatisation. The report confirms suspicions that the Government has tried to obscure the importance to Britain of EU structural funds, which are to help the poorest regions.

In many cases where successful job-creation projects have been launched with EU money, the Government claimed the credit for itself. The parliament, which adopted the report yesterday, levels its strongest criticism at the way public utilities became major recipients of the structural funds in the 1980s and early 1990s, even after privatisation.

Europe's structural funds are specifically intended to promote job creation, but these same utilities have been engaged in massive job reduction and downsizing, says the report, which cites 300,000 job losses in five privatised companies.

The report's author is Arlene McCarthy, Labour MEP for the Peak District, who based her studies on 25 hours of evidence from parties across Britain, and 2,000 questionnaires. British Conservative members of the parliament yesterday voted against the report.

Miss McCarthy questioned the morality of the way money was directed to utilities which then produced huge profits for shareholders after privatisation. Yorkshire Water received £30m of regional-development money before it was privatised and £1m after. British gas, electricity, telecoms and ports benefited the same way. It could be argued, says the report, "that the financial position of state utilities was enhanced ahead of privatisation with the use of EU taxpayers funds."

The European Commission, which has already inquired into the way aid funds have been used during the British privatisation process, has found nothing illegal. However, the Commission points out that no other country has directed funds to privatised utilities, and says that new rules will be drawn up in future, as privatisation speeds up in other member-states. The parliament's research shed light on benefits Britain has reaped from aid funds, particularly in areas of industrial decline, known as "objective two" areas, which include the East and West Midlands, Yorkshire, Humberside, the North-east, east Scotland and west Cumbria. Britain has the highest allocation of EU funds for "objective two" areas in the Union.

However, money, distributed largely by government-appointed committees, often fails to reach recipients as a result of low staffing, over-centralisation and lack of planning. Many groups in the voluntary sector, as well as training colleges and small businesses, are deterred from applying for funds because of fears about delays and debt, says the report.

In one case a college in Humberside ran up £200,000 in debt because funding agreed for a training scheme arrived two years too late.



Pole position: A fisherman putting up stake nets at St Cyrus beach in Aberdeenshire for the start of the salmon and trout season. The method is unique to St Cyrus and has continued for more than 100 years, but is threatened by dwindling stocks due to over fishing and seals. Photograph: Colin McPherson

Kinnock demands damages for truckers

Colin Blackstock
and Katherine Butler

Neil Kinnock, the EU transport commissioner, yesterday called on the French to compensate hauliers caught up in the two-day blockade of Channel ports, while British ferry companies are threatening to enforce fines of up to 150,000 francs on the fishermen involved.

In Brussels, Mr Kinnock accused the French of reneging on their promise to pay out compensation to victims of last year's French lorry drivers strike.

In a letter to French transport minister Bernard Pons, Mr Kinnock complained that many road haulage companies from neighbouring countries had

suffered "significant" damages because of the blockade. He demanded that similar levels of compensation, as promised during the truckers dispute be applied this time.

Mr Kinnock's office has been inundated with complaints from road haulage companies who say their claims have still not been dealt with.

Brussels does not have the power to order compensation be paid and can only exert moral pressure on the French. Mr Kinnock admitted he was still waiting for Paris to submit a report detailing the number of compensation claims it had dealt with to date, but said French sovereignty had to be respected. "Obviously it is frustrating for

me not to be able to intervene directly, but the people who are calling for that would be the first to express their outrage if Brussels intervened in a dispute in their country."

The ferry companies affected by the dispute were considering their options yesterday. A spokesman for Stena Line said "Stena, P&O, and SeaFrance were all granted injunctions against the fishermen involved in the blockades and were entitled to ask the French courts to impose fines of up to 150,000 francs on each boat."

However the spokesman said it was unlikely they would seek to enforce the fines available through the injunction for the sake of diplomacy.

The spokesman said: "We don't want to inflame the situation by pursuing these fines, and losing customers. We have decided not to ask the courts to invoke the injunctions which last for one month."

"By not invoking the injunctions we can give ourselves the option of waiting for a month to see what the fishermen do. Depending on what they do will depend on whether we invoke the injunction."

A spokeswoman for P&O said: "We would only consider this action provided we were given assurances that the port of Calais remained open and free from further blockades."

The Stena spokesman made it clear that they would have to

invoke the injunctions if the fishermen decided to blockade the ports again. "I think the danger of not pursuing the fines means that any future injunctions against more blockades lose force. If we seek an injunction and then fail to follow it up then it really negates that course of action in the future."

Under the terms of the injunction each boat involved in the blockade can be fined 10,000 francs per hour for every hour it remains in the blockade after the injunction is served. The French fishermen were served the injunction at 7pm on Wednesday evening, but did not leave until 10am yesterday morning.

Meanwhile the EU fisheries

spokesman Filippo di Robilant said it was up to the French to seek a review of the controversial rules on fishing net sizes which triggered the blockade.

Paris had not asked for the regulation, designed to conserve fish, to be amended and it would in any case have to persuade a majority of its EU partners if the legislation was to be changed.

Mr Di Robilant said Brussels would oppose a revision of the law scheduled to come into effect in January because the restrictions were needed to conserve fish. The blockade, he said, provided further "clear evidence that there are too many fishermen chasing too few fish".

Leading article, page 19

Downloading from the Internet
without ISDN?

Here's something to pass the time.

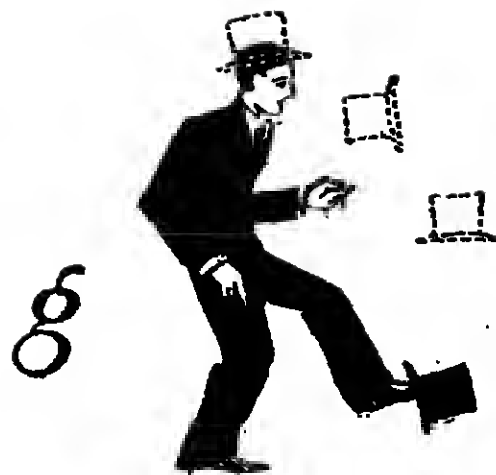


Fig. 7. Juggling and balancing with difficult objects.

With BT's ISDN, downloading from the Internet is up to four times quicker than with an ordinary phone line. Because ISDN is digital, calls connect almost instantaneously and graphics can be downloaded much faster. ISDN pricing options start at a surprisingly low £199*. For details, call BT Businessconnections on Freephone 0800 800 800 now.

Freefone 0800 800 800

Freelink 0800 800 955 e-mail: worksmart@bt.co.uk



Fayed's court challenge fails

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

The decisions of Sir Gordon Downey, the watchdog on parliamentary malpractice, cannot be challenged in the courts, a High Court judge ruled yesterday. Mr Justice Sedley rejected a bid by Harrod's owner, Mohamed al-Fayed, to question the validity of a report concerning the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, saying that the court had no jurisdiction over Sir Gordon's actions.

The report, completed in March, cleared Mr Howard of allegations by Mr Fayed that he took £1.5m in bribes from Lushro chief Tiny Rowland through an intermediary in 1987, in exchange for opening a Department of Trade and Industry inquiry into the takeover of House of Fraser.

Mr Fayed's counsel, David Pannick QC, had applied to the court for a judicial review of the report, asking for it to be quashed as unreasonable. Sir Gordon had failed to question several witnesses and was not thorough enough in looking into Mr Howard's acquisition of funds and property, it was alleged. The case raised a question of "considerable constitutional importance" over whether or not the commissioner was subject to challenge in the courts. He



Fayed: Failed to have Sir Gordon's report quashed

should not be immune from review, Mr Pannick argued.

Mr Pannick said the commissioner performed an "important governmental function involving matters of substantial public interest, that is conducting official investigations into allegations of breaches of parliamentary standards."

Stephen Richards, for the commissioner, said his client was an officer of Parliament appointed internally after the recommendations of the Nolan report into parliamentary standards. His role was to investigate complaints about the conduct of MPs. "The House of Commons is not subject to the courts in internal proceedings," he argued. Mr Pannick said that if the

subject to court control, government departments would be able to "immunise" decisions of important bodies from judicial review. The court should consider the scope of judicial review. Mr Justice Sedley, giving his ruling, said the "constitutional divide" between the judiciary and Parliament was of "great historical importance". He said that Sir Gordon was not subject to scrutiny because he had been appointed internally by Parliament to report directly to a select committee. That did not mean Parliament could hide from judicial review by carrying out investigations under standing orders, because departments of state were part of the executive and open to control by statute and common law.

YOU COULD PAY LESS.

For affordable private health cover call us NOW.

Prime Health 0800 779 955
Quoting reference M0447206

A member of the Standard Life Group

Renewing your home insurance in April or May and want to save money?

* Saga - The specialists in insurance for people aged 50 and over
* Comprehensive, low cost cover
* A service that is direct and trouble free
* Discount for secure homes

Call free today! SAGA Services Ltd

0800 414 525 Quoting reference ID4717

Lines open Monday to Friday 8.30am - 7pm, Saturdays 9am - 1pm

Saga Services Ltd would like to send you information about services provided by other Saga companies and may pass details to those companies to contact you on.

من الأول

World hunt for lost Hitchcock thriller

Nicole Veasey

An international campaign to track down a missing Hitchcock classic is to be launched by the British Film Institute today, to coincide with the re-release of his 1958 masterpiece, *Vertigo*.

The *Mountain Eagle*, Hitchcock's second feature film, has been lost since its release in 1926, although a number of early stills and critical reviews of early showings still exist. David Meeker, chief archivist at the British Film Institute, said that film enthusiasts have been searching for the lost classic, the missing piece in Hitchcock's oeuvre, for the past 70 years.

"No one has seen the film since the day it was released," he said. "All that has survived is half a dozen tantalising stills of this great film."

The re-release of *Vertigo* has prompted us to make a renewed effort to find any print of this long-lost classic.

The Anglo-German production, shot in the Tyrol, tells the story of a young schoolmistress driven into the mountains after rejecting the attentions of the local justice of the peace.

She is eventually given shelter by

a mysterious recluse who marries her to put an end to the scandal and who is then jailed on a trumped-up murder charge.

"The search for the film is made more complex because it had two different titles: the British-German version, *The Mountain Eagle*, and the US version, *Fear o' God*," said Mr Meeker.

"Because the film was made in Europe there is the possibility that an enthusiast in one of the old Eastern bloc countries, who were not allowed to collect films under the Communist regime, might have a copy under another name."

"It's more than likely that the masterprint is long gone, but there might be a collector somewhere sitting on another copy."

The *Mountain Eagle*, which was scripted by Hitchcock's future wife Alma Reville, is one of a number of silent British classics which are missing, presumed lost. Until the Fifties, and the advent of television reruns, "old" films were disregarded by the cinema-going public who were interested only in new releases. Because of this lack of demand, movies - then shot on nitrate stock which easily deteriorates - were lost through both decay and neglect.



Action! Alfred Hitchcock, (front) directing, and the film crew of *The Mountain Eagle*, which has not been seen since its release in 1926

But Hitchcock, who directed 53 films, including the classics *North by Northwest*, *Psycho* and *The Birds*, was never worried about his missing movie.

He once discussed *The Mountain Eagle* with art-director François Truffaut, and said: "It was a very bad movie."

"The producers were always trying to break into the American market, so they sent me a Hollywood film star for the part of the schoolmistress who had fangirls out there. Ridiculous."

Commentators at the time appeared to agree to some extent with the master of suspense. A review in *The Bioscope*, a contemporary publication, said, "the story was lacking in conviction", but referred to "the undoubted artistic merits of the production" and the "at times brilliant direction".

"We can only hope that somewhere in the world, perhaps in someone's loft, there is a version of this film," said Mr Meeker.

"It would be a tragedy if it was gone forever, but we must remain optimistic just in case some possessive private collector is sitting on it."



In suspense: Kim Novak and James Stewart starring in Hitchcock's 1958 classic thriller *Vertigo*, whose re-release today has prompted the British Film Institute to launch a worldwide hunt for *The Mountain Eagle*

Judge in newsboy trial 'misled jury'

The judge's summing-up in the original trial of the four men accused of killing newspaper boy Carl Bridgewater was unbalanced, the Court of Appeal was told yesterday.

The judge, Mr Justice Drake, also "wrongly" told the jury that he had naturally formed his own views as to where the truth lay in the case, Patrick O'Connor QC, counsel for James Robinson, one of the accused, said.

Mr O'Connor detailed the criticisms on the fourth day of the appeal against conviction on behalf of the four men jailed for the death of the 13-year-old at Yew Tree Farm, near Stourbridge, West Midlands, in 1978. Carl Bridgewater was killed by a single shotgun blast to the head after he entered the farm to deliver a newspaper.

Robinson, now 63, and cousins Michael Hickey, 35, and Vincent Hickey, 42, were jailed for murder. The fourth man, Patrick Molloy, died in prison in 1981 while serving a 12-year sentence for manslaughter.

Mr O'Connor told Lord Justice Roch, Mr Justice Hadden and Mr Justice Mitchell that Robinson was not only the victim of prejudicial evidence at his trial, but had been let down by the legal system.

"Substantial responsibility" lay at the door of the trial judge and the prosecution and defence lawyers, he said.

The "truth" comment made by Mr Justice Drake was wrong and inappropriate, he said, adding: "The Crown concedes that this sentiment would probably not be used today."

Mr O'Connor further alleged that the judges, prosecution and defence counsel had failed to secure a fair trial for Mr Robinson and that the case against him was "riddled with faults."

None of the Bridgewater Three - who are at present on bail - were in court yesterday.

They were released on unconditional bail in February after an independent forensic test revealed police had falsified a statement in a bid to extract a confession from the late Mr Molloy.

The appeal continues.

Mystery of the missing movies

Abandoned in disused film laboratories, buried in foreign archives under different titles, hoarded by private collectors or thrown away by a small studio which has gone bankrupt - these are just a few ways in which old classics have been lost.

The missing movies include: *Murder at Monte Carlo* (1935) - Errol Flynn's performance in this, his first British film, drew him to the attention of Hollywood moguls. *The Bells* (1931) - a psychological thriller and the first British film with a score by Gustav Holst, the composer. *She* (1916) - based on H Rider Haggard's spectacular adventure story about explorers in Egypt discovering a lost city. *A Study in Scarlet* (1914) - the first British Sherlock Holmes film.

Films found in the past two years: *Bella Donna* (1934) - an exotic melodrama, starring Conrad Veidt and Mary Ellis, found in the Czech Republic film archives. *The Constant Nymph* (1928) - the tale of a doomed love affair, starring Ivor Novello, found in a private collection.

Gay group sex ban to be challenged in Euro court

Kathy Marks

A homosexual man who was prosecuted for having group sex in his own home is to take the Government to the European Court of Human Rights.

The man, who does not wish to be identified, was convicted of gross indecency by magistrates a few months ago. The sexual activity on which the case was based took place between five men in their thirties and forties.

The man in question was arrested after police searched his house during an unrelated investigation and seized a home video that he had made for personal consumption.

Under the 1967 legislation

that decriminalised homosexuality, consensual sex between gay men is legal if they are over the age of consent, now 18, and it takes place in private. However, "privacy" is defined as there being no more than two men present.

Gross indecency covers any unlawful sexual contact between men, and is the classical offence used to prosecute homosexual men who have sex in public toilets or parks.

The man, who was in his forties, has lodged an application with the Strasbourg court, claiming a breach of his right to privacy under Article 8 of the Human Rights Convention. He is also claiming sex discrimination under Article 14 since

gross indecency is an offence that applies only to gay men. Heterosexuals or lesbians can legally have group sex in private.

Lawyers believe that the man has a very strong case, and say that a ruling in his favour could force the Government to repeal the 19th century offence of gross indecency.

Ben Emmerson, his barrister, said: "The law will always regulate behaviour that is truly public and is offensive to others."

He added that gay men could be prosecuted under the Public Order Act, the law that covers improper conduct in public by heterosexuals or lesbians.

Mr Emmerson said that the case, together with that of Euan

Sutherland, another gay man, "spells the end of gross indecency on the statute books."

Mr Sutherland's case, for breach of privacy on the grounds of inequality in the age of consent laws, has already been ruled inadmissible by the Strasbourg Court.

Amy Palmer, deputy director of Stonewall, which campaigns for homosexual rights, said: "It is extraordinary to have a criminal offence that applies only to gay men. The same laws should apply to everyone."

The man said yesterday that he had taken part in "nothing other than harmless fun. There was no way that our activities could have caused offence."

Record complaints in first year of privatised railways

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

In the first full year of rail privatisation, complaints in southern England - including from customers on troubled South West Trains - have soared to their highest level of the decade.

According to figures released yesterday, a total of 1,024 complaints were received by the South of England Rail Users' Consultative Committee, the passenger watchdog, in the 12 months to the end of March 1997.

This total was 56 per cent up on the 1995-96 figure and the highest of the 1990s. The latest figures include February and March 1997 when South West Trains cancelled 39 trains a day because of driver shortages.

SWT was forced to introduce an emergency timetable in February and was fined £750,000 in the same month for cancellations and delays by the franchising director - who let the service to bus giant Stagecoach in 1996.



Commuter compensation: Frequent cancellation of services forced SWT to offer a day's free travel in February

The committee said complaints about reliability had shown a significant increase in the final quarter of 1996-97. "Much is attributable to the recent problems experienced by South West Trains," the committee added.

SWT was not the only victim of passengers' ire. Another privatised company, Connex South

Eastern, was targeted for its decision to cut train lengths - which led to overcrowded carriages on many routes.

Save Our Railways, the anti-privatisation lobby group, said the rapid rise in the level of complaints was "unacceptable".

Keith Bill, the group's national secretary, called for "radical changes to be made to the rail

industry after the election - whoever wins power."

He added: "The message from commuters is now coming through loud and clear. Commuters are fed up with high fares, overcrowding and cancellations."

Individual rail companies do not normally give details of the complaints made directly to them - which usually far exceed the number made to both the national and regional rail users' committees.

However, SWT broke with tradition and admitted receiving more than 28,000 complaints for the first year in private hands. The company claimed that this was 1,500 less than was received by British Rail - but admitted the figure did not include the worst period of disruption in February and March.

"The increase in the number of complaints was not just down to South West Trains. We have been running a full service since April and have tried to be as helpful as possible to our customers," said a spokeswoman for the company.

first direct

Free from charges

Banking with First Direct is free because we do not charge Cheque Account customers for everyday banking transactions, even if you're overdrawn. And all our customers automatically receive an overdraft up to £250 - also free of any fees. So compared to other high street bank accounts you're better off with First Direct from day one. We're a member of the HSBC Group which is one of the largest banking and financial services organisations in the world, and in the course of a year you'll find we offer more cost effective current account banking. And the service we provide means you benefit in many other ways too.

By telephone, 24 hours a day

We provide the ultimate in convenience. You can bank with us at any time, 365 days (and nights) of the year, from wherever there's a telephone, in your home, office or car. And all UK calls are charged at local rates.

Personal and professional service

Every call is answered by our Banking Representatives. They have all they need at their fingertips to deal with your day-to-day banking needs. And when you require more specialised assistance, such as a loan, they can instantly refer you to someone who can help.

Getting cash is easy

Every Cheque Account customer receives the First Direct Card. This allows you to withdraw up to £500 a day from over 11,500 cash machines around the UK, including those of Midland. It also guarantees cheques for £100 and includes the Switch payment facility.

So is paying bills

Our service includes a free bill payment service. Simply call, tell us who to pay, how much and when, and we do it. This means you can arrange to pay your bills at the most convenient time without the need to keep having to remember to organise it.

A full banking service with more benefits

As well as our Cheque Account we offer saving, borrowing, travel and insurance services cost effectively by telephone. Take saving; our rates are always competitive, we offer transfers to and from your Cheque Account. So your money is always working hard without the need for you to do the same.

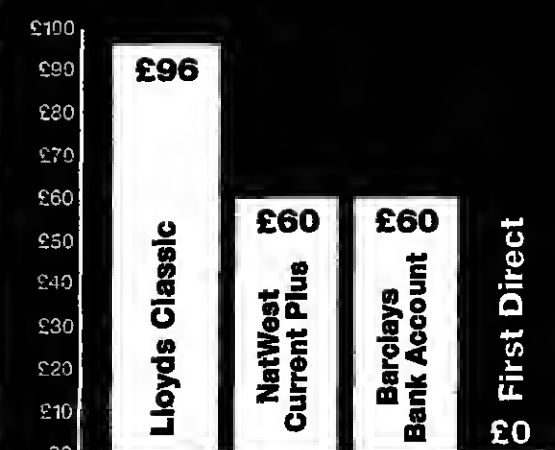
We work hard to maintain the service

The best people to demonstrate the quality of a banking service are its customers - 87% of ours have recommended us to their friends and colleagues in the last 12 months.

Opening an account is easy too

We also appreciate how daunting changing bank accounts can be. So we make it easy. Easy to open a First Direct account, then easy to arrange for your salary to be paid in and easy for all your standing orders and direct debits to be transferred to your account. And it's easy (and free) to find out more right now. Call us on 0800 24 24 24 or complete the coupon.

Why pay to bank when First Direct is free?



Annual current account charges (annual fees for use of £250 overdraft)

If you're paying more are you with the right bank?

0800 24 24 24

Call free or complete the coupon and post to: First Direct, FREEPOST, Leeds LS98 2RF

Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms or Title

Surname

Forename(s)

UK Address

Postcode

Telephone No

Small vertical text on the right margin, likely a barcode or reference number.

PC WORLD

THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE

**BUY NOW
PAY 1998***
ON ALL PCs



ADVENT
150MHz Pentium Processor.
16Mb EDO RAM. 1.2Gb hard disk.
Eight speed Multimedia. 1Mb 64 bit
graphics. 16 bit stereo soundcard.
Over £350 worth of software!
Including Windows '95 and Works.
MODEL: 8150.

**150MHz
PENTIUM PC**
£999
BUY NOW
PAY 9 MONTHS

COMPAQ

60MHz 133MHz Processor.
16Mb RAM. 2Gb hard disk.
8 speed CD-ROM.
28.8Kbps data/fax modem.
16 bit stereo soundcard.
Includes 7 top software titles.
MODEL: Presario 2110.

NEW

£1099
BUY NOW
PAY 9 MONTHS

APRICOT

133MHz Pentium Processor.
16Mb EDO RAM. 2.5Gb hard disk.
8 speed multimedia. 2Mb 3D
Graphics card. 28.8Kbps data/fax
modem. Was £1399.
MODEL: MS50 P133.
BUY NOW PAY 9 MONTHS.

SAVE

£1000
£1299

HEWLETT PACKARD

150MHz Pentium Processor.
32Mb RAM. 2.1Gb hard disk.
8 speed multimedia.
33.6Kbps modem.
FREE £350 cheque to spend
at PC World! Was £1599.
MODEL: Pavilion 532Z.
BUY NOW PAY 9 MONTHS.

SAVE

£100
£1499

APRICOT

166MHz Pentium Processor
with MMX Technology.
16Mb EDO RAM. 2.5Gb hard disk.
8 speed multimedia. Modem.
PRICE 12 months unlimited
Internet Access!
Was £1799. MODEL: MS540 P166.
BUY NOW PAY 9 MONTHS.

SAVE

£200
£1599

PORTABLES SAVE UP TO £200



OLIVETTI
133MHz Pentium
Processor.
8Mb RAM. 1Gb hard
disk. Eight speed
CD-ROM. 11.3" SVGA
Dual Scan colour
display. 2 x Type II
PCMCIA slots.
MODEL: Echo S P133CD5.

NEW
£1399
BUY NOW PAY 9 MONTHS

TOSHIBA

100MHz Pentium Processor.
8Mb EDO RAM.
810Mb hard disk.
11.3" dual scan colour display.
Was £1249. £1199.
MODEL: Satellite 110CS.

SAVE

£200
£1049
BUY NOW
PAY 9 MONTHS

ACER

120MHz Pentium Processor.
8Mb RAM. 1Gb hard disk.
11.3" SVGA dual scan colour
display. Includes Windows 95.
Was £1199.
MODEL: 370C.

SAVE

£50
£1149
BUY NOW
PAY 9 MONTHS

PRINTERS - APRIL PRICE-CUTS



EPSON
Colour Inkjet Printer.
Up to 720 x 720 DPI
resolution (black and
colour). Up to 4 pages
per minute (black).
Photo-real printing.
MODEL: Stylus Color 500.

SAVE
£30
£199
LOW PRICE PROMISE

CANON

Colour Inkjet Printer.
720 x 360 DPI resolution
(black). 360 x 360 DPI
resolution (colour). Up to
5 pages per minute (black).
Was £149.
MODEL: BJC150.

SAVE

£20
£129

CANON

Colour Inkjet Printer.
Up to 720 x 360 DPI resolution
(black). Up to 360 x 360 DPI
resolution (colour). Up to 5
pages per minute (black).
Was £149. £149.
MODEL: BJC40.

SAVE

£35
£144
LOW PRICE PROMISE

HEWLETT PACKARD

Colour Inkjet Printer.
Up to 600 x 600 DPI
resolution (black). Up to 6.5
pages per minute (black).
FREE PAPER AND CARTRIDGE.
Was £299. £289.
MODEL: Design 800C.

SAVE

£30
£289

BROTHER

Laser Printer.
Up to 1200 x 600 DPI
resolution. Up to 6 pages
per minute. PCLSe printer
language.
FREE £25 PRESSWORKS.
Was £429. MODEL: HL-760.

SAVE

£30
£399

FREE CANON COLOUR INKJET PRINTER

ON SELECTED PCs



**FREE
OVER
£1000
WORTH OF
SOFTWARE**

**SAVE
£100**
£1299

PACKARD BELL

The Perfect Package
Whether you are a first time buyer, or replacing your old PC,
you'll have to go a long way to find a better deal than this.
Free Canon Colour Bubblejet Printer - PLUS Save £100!
150MHz Pentium Processor. 16Mb
RAM. 1.6Gb hard disk. Eight speed
multimedia. 1Mb PCI Graphics.
Over £1000 worth of Software!
Was £1399.
MODEL: Packard Bell 9016D

**FREE
CANON
COLOUR
INKJET
PRINTER**

PACKARD BELL

150MHz Pentium Processor.
16Mb RAM. 2Gb hard disk. 8 speed CD-ROM.
Stereo soundcard and speakers. 28.8Kbps data/fax
modem. Media select panel. **Over £1000 worth of
Software!** Was £1699. £1599. **SAVE £200.**
MODEL: 9017D.
BUY NOW PAY 9 MONTHS.

FREE

PRINTER
£1499

PACKARD BELL

166MHz Pentium Processor with MMX Technology.
16Mb RAM. 2Gb hard disk. 8 speed multimedia.
15" SVGA colour monitor. **Over £1000 worth of
Software!** Was £1799. **SAVE £100.**
MODEL: 9018X.
BUY NOW PAY 9 MONTHS.

FREE

PRINTER
£1699

133MHz PENTIUM PCs FROM ONLY £899



ACER

133MHz Pentium Processor.
16Mb RAM. 1.2Gb hard disk.
Eight speed multimedia.
1Mb PCI Graphics.
16 bit soundcard and speakers.
256k cache
memory.
Windows 95
and Works.
Was £1149. £999.
MODEL: Acros P133.

**SAVE
£250**
£899
BUY NOW
PAY 9 MONTHS

PC WORLD

THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE

FOR YOUR NEAREST STORE CALL 0990 464 464

ABERDEEN
BIRMINGHAM
BURNLEY
CARDIFF
CHATHAM
COLCHESTER
COVENTRY
GLASGOW
LEEDS
LONDON
MANCHESTER
MILTON KEYNES
NOTTINGHAM
PETERBOROUGH
PLYMOUTH
READING
SHEFFIELD
SLOUGH
SOUTHAMPTON
SPRINGFIELD
STOKE
SWINDON

LONDON AREA
BRENTFORD
CROYDON
ENFIELD
GUILDFORD
LAKESIDE
STAPLES
CORNLEY

OPEN
7 DAYS A
WEEK

UNBEATABLE SERVICE - TEST DRIVE A PC

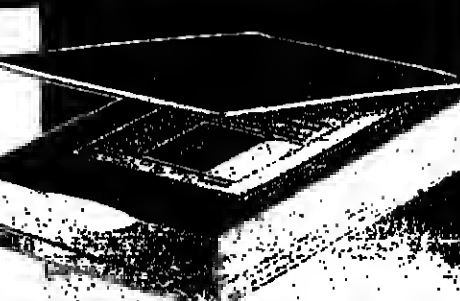
We won't be beaten
We promise that if you find the same offer
available at a lower price in any other local
retail store within 7 days of purchase we
will refund the difference - guaranteed
providing you produce your receipt and
details of where you saw the offer.

LOW PRICE PROMISE

PERIPHERALS - SAVE UP TO £70

SCANNER

Epson GTS 5000
Flatbed Colour.
Scans in at up to 2400
OPI resolution. High
quality flat-bed colour
scanner.



BEST SELLER

£249
LOW PRICE PROMISE

CD-ROM DRIVE

Creative Labs 12 Speed.
Fast 12 speed CD-ROM drive.
Features full remote control.
Complete with full fitting
instructions.
Includes Encarta 97.
Was £129.

SAVE

£10
£119

HARD DRIVE

3.5Gb Hard Drive.
Update your hard drive with a
massive 3.5Gb and effectively
manage all your current and
future applications. Easy to
install. Full instructions
included. Was £249. £239.

SAVE

£70
£279

4MB GRAPHICS CARD

Matrox Millennium 2000.
Bring arcade quality 3-D
action to your games. The
best in gaming graphics.
Was £179.

SAVE

£30
£149

56K MODEM

US Robotics Sportster.
Get connected with the latest
56K technology. Downloads at
an incredible 56Kbps. 2 times
faster than current 28.8Kbps
modems. Was £229.

SAVE

£30
£199

MEMORY PRICE CRASH

SAVE UP TO £20
Memory crash on Periphereque and
Atasc Memory SIMM (4Mb, 8Mb
and 16Mb RAM only). Save up to £20
FROM
£19.99
Was £39.99 now £19.99

DATA STORAGE

Imagema Zip Drive.
Fast data storage and
retrieval. Available in
internal or external setup.
Choose from SCSI or parallel
connection. Was £149.

SAVE

£20
£129

SOFTWARE - OVER 1500 TITLES

MICROSOFT HOME ESSENTIALS 97

Includes 5 superb products at one
amazing price. With Microsoft Word 97,
Microsoft Money 97,
Microsoft Works,
Microsoft Encarta 97
World Atlas
and Microsoft Football.



**OUT
NOW**
£99

ACCOUNTS

Microsoft Money 97.
The easy and
smart way to
manage all
your finances
from paying
bills to planning for retirement.

BEST SELLER

£29.99

MICROSOFT ENCARTA 97

The updated
version of the
world's leading
multimedia
encyclopedia.
Find out
everything you
need to know.
Worth £29.99.

FREE SOFTWARE

£44.99

GRAPHICS

Microsoft Picture It!
Enjoy and
share treasured
photos.
Plus FREE
Windows Camera
worth £15.99. Was £79.99.

SAVE

£30
£49.99

PROGRAMMING

Microsoft Visual Basic.
Everything you need
to create the best
Java applications fast.

NEW

£79

FLIGHT SIM. V6

MS Flight
Simulator V6.
The most
realistic flight
simulation
available.
Includes the
UK's No.1 joystick.
Total Separate Selling Price £109.99.

SAVE OVER

£25
£79.99

PROGRAMMING

Microsoft Visual C++.
Professional
Developer's Kit.
The ultimate
enterprise
tool for all project teams and
individual use.

NEW

£429

MICROSOFT OFFICE 97

Specifically designed to meet the needs
of small businesses. Includes Microsoft
Word 97,
MS Excel 97,
MS Publisher
97 Deluxe,
MS Outlook 97,
MS AutoRoute
Express GB
plus 1 month's
FREE connection
to Microsoft
MSN.

OUT NOW

£199

'BUY NOW PAY 1998 ON ALL PCs

Buy now with nothing to pay for 9 months. Interest will be charged
from the day of the agreement if the item is not paid within 9
months. Typical example: Cash price £1199.99. 18% APR. 12 months.
Total amount payable £1199.99. 18% APR. 12 months. Total amount
payable £1199.99. 18% APR. 12 months. Total amount payable £1199.99.
18% APR. 12 months. Total amount payable £1199.99.

APR

29.5%

Charit
Warn o
poor d
of you

packet full of
sunny food

IT'S MAKE
MIND UP

THE BOOK N
GENER
ELECTN
GUID

THE BOOK N
GUIDE YOU NEED
THE 1999

JOHN HUMPHREY
PETER SNOW
DAVID B
KOB

الكتاب من الأصل

Charities warn over poor diet of young

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

Large numbers of British children could suffer malnutrition in the next century unless urgent action is taken, according to food experts.

Two major reports published today say that families living in deprived areas without access to supermarkets and little money are unable to give their children an adequate diet.

The reports have been conducted by Save The Children which is best known for its famine relief work overseas, and the National Food Alliance which represents national public interest organisations.

Save The Children interviewed mothers in London, Glasgow, Coventry, Sunderland and Belfast. It found that they understood the need to eat more fruit and vegetables. They were also resourceful shoppers and were willing to go into debt or miss meals themselves to prevent their children from

going hungry. But they had restricted access to cheap food, being forced to use expensive local shops.

The survey's results were backed up by a report by the National Food Alliance attacking "the main misconceptions about eating healthily on a low income".

The report found that Between 13 and 14 million people live in households where the income is below 50 per cent of the UK average - less than about £120 a week. Many of these families eat as little as 95g of fresh green vegetables each week, equivalent to barely one Brussels sprout per person per day.

Poor households consume almost twice the amount of full-fat milk as the well-off, and more than double the amount of white bread.

In 1995, a study of the costs of a modest but nutritionally adequate diet to meet the needs of women, especially when pregnant, found their diet cost an average of £18.12 and could cost as much as £23 a week if there was no supermarket nearby - representing up to 60 per cent of the whole benefit payment for women aged 18-25.

"Cheapest calories come from foods generally considered unhealthy," continues the report. "To get all the calories needed in a day when spending the least money the best bet is to go for a high-fat sugary diet - biscuits, sweet tea, white bread with hard margarine."

The idea that low-income families would spend any extra money on "fags and the lottery" is also a myth. Given £10 extra a week 46 per cent of low-income families say they would spend it on food.

The groups called on the Government to implement a national strategy on food and low income, and carry out a comprehensive assessment of social security benefits. They also called for free school milk to be reinstated.

"Out of the Frying Pan: The True Costs of Feeding a Family on a Low Income" is available from Save The Children Publications, 0171 703 5400. No charge, but the charity welcomes donations.

"If they don't eat a healthy diet it's their own fault" - Myths about Food and Low Income" is available from the NFA, 5-11 Worship St, London EC2A 2BH priced £20.

A basket full of healthy food

This is the weekly shopping basket that would provide a realistic and nutritionally adequate diet for an 11- to 14-year-old boy - who requires 2,220 calories per day

Packet of cornflakes/weetabix; one loaf brown bread; one loaf, wholemeal; 1 pkt crisps; 385g tin of baked beans; 3 yogurts; spaghetti; 100g tin of tuna; three 200g tins of tinned tomatoes; 3 onions; 4 oranges; 4 pears; 5 apples (one for baking); 3 bananas; 1 small pack of potatoes; tin of pichards; 350g (12oz) of potatoes; 50g (2oz) carrots; 90g (3oz) cauliflower; 55g (2oz) peas; 50g (2oz) carrots; 180g (6oz) chips; 50g (2oz) sweetcorn; coleslaw 50g (1oz); lettuce; cucumber; 4 tomatoes; 90g (3oz) cabbage; 140g (4.8oz) broccoli; 2 large jacket potatoes; 250g (8oz) of chicken; 75g (2.5oz) corned beef; 70g (2.5oz) ham; cod in crumbs 120g; minced beef; 2 fishfingers; 2 rashers bacon; gravy; tomato soup; vegetable soup; Eden cheese; 4 eggs; 1 tin kidney beans; 1 chocolate mousse; 120g tinned peaches; custard; 6 semisweet biscuits; rice pudding; 1 Mars bar; trifle; 1 tin of pineapple; raisins; 2 currant buns; tinsack; 2 pieces of fruit cake.

Total cost: £16.12
Source: Poor Expectations 1996 by the Maternity Alliance

Bereaved father's claim for his wife's benefits could end up costing the taxpayer millions



Lone parent: Kevin Willis in London yesterday to draw attention to the difficulties that widowed fathers face. He intends to take his case to the European Court. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

My children have lost a mother. Why must they lose cash as well?

Simon Reeve

A widower launched proceedings against the Government in the European Court of Human Rights yesterday in a case which could cost the Treasury hundreds of millions of pounds in extra payments to bereaved fathers, who currently receive less state money than widowed mothers.

Kevin Willis, from Bristol, is bringing up two young children on his own after his wife Marlene died of cancer last June. Although a woman in his position would qualify for a one-off payment of £1,000, and a weekly sum of nearly £85, Mr Willis is forced to live off diminishing savings.

With the backing of the Child Poverty Action Group and the Campaign for Widowed Fathers' Benefits, Mr Willis is taking the Government to the European Court in Strasbourg. He is furious that Britain is the only country in the European Union where he, and approximately 20,000 other bereaved fathers, are ineligible for benefits.

"The children have lost their mother and it seems grossly unfair to me that they should suffer financially as well just because it was mum and not dad who died," said Mr Willis yesterday. "It is completely unjust that motherless children should be worst affected."

Mr Willis gave up work to care for his wife after her condition was diagnosed in 1990, shortly after the birth of their second child. "We sat down together and talked about finances because we knew she hadn't got long to live and Marlene desperately wanted her children to have a decent upbringing," said Mr Willis. "We knew there wasn't much support available and we knew we had to save money quickly."

Mrs Willis worked as a housing officer for Bristol Housing Authority until 1993, when she had to leave because of her health. "She knew how difficult a mortgage can be for just one partner, and the relief on her face was obvious when we made the last payment the next year. She knew that whatever happened to her, there would be a house to live in for all of us."

Mr Willis previously worked for nine years as a field service engineer, which involved travelling away from home, and he is now determined to look after his children full time. Yesterday, he rushed back to Bristol from a round of television interviews and meetings in London to take his daughter to a Brownies meeting.

"While I am caring for them I will only be able to take a low-paid part-time job. Many fathers in my situation have to make a decision between losing their children or losing their home," said Mr Willis. "I am not prepared to let my family fall into that poverty-trap after what we

have already been through." The family are now surviving on their savings, which Mr Willis believes will last for another four years, plus child benefit and £100 a month from his wife's pension.

After his claim for support was rejected last November, Mr Willis decided to take action on the grounds that the Government is in breach of various provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, including Article 8, which concerns the right to a family life. "Marlene had been in her job paying taxes for 19 years," said Mr Willis, "and it is not right that the state doesn't provide for her children after she has gone."

Humphrey Woods, of the Campaign for Widowed Fathers' Benefits, said the situation dated back to the time when men were the sole breadwinners. "But times have changed and so should the benefit rules," he said. "The Child Poverty Action Group said that although there were other state benefits for widowers it was unfair that men such as Mr Willis are worse off than women in similar situations. "Based on recent cases we believe we have a strong case," said David Thomas, the CPAG's legal officer. "However, rather than force Kevin to take his case all the way to Strasbourg, we would like to see whoever is in power after the election change the rules to reflect the reality of modern life."

How to avoid loss where wife is the breadwinner

Nic Cicuttii
Personal Finance Editor

Bereavement is a terrible enough trauma without the financial uncertainties that can follow when the family's breadwinner dies.

Although those most likely to be affected are women whose partners have died, a significant number of men face the same problem. According to the Child Poverty Action Group, between 20,000 and 40,000 widowers are denied such benefits.

Figures from the Office of National Statistics show women are the sole breadwinners in 563,000 families where the husband is unemployed.

The most effective way to protect oneself in such cases is to take out insurance. Before taking that step, it is worth checking whether there is a life insurance cover as a work-related perk. Many employers offer such cover, often between twice and four times the person's salary. However, a survey by Legal & General found only 24 per cent of men had life cover through their work, and only 4 per cent of women are in jobs where such cover is available.

In most cases, the breadwinner's death should lead to the family's mortgage being paid off through separate life cover linked to the loan.

Here, it is important to ensure that both men and women are jointly named on the insurance. If the home and the insurance were in the husband's name only, but the mortgage is paid only by the woman, in the event of her death the loan may not be paid off.

Life cover is the main alternative for those who fear leaving their dependents in a financial mess if they die. The cheapest option is so-called term assurance, where cover is taken out for a limited period. If the policyholder dies in that time, the insurance pays out. The reverse applies if the policyholder survives.

For a 30-year-old couple just starting a family, joint term assurance of £80,000 for 20 years to cover their children's early years costs about £15 a month.

Finally, critical illness insurance, a relatively new type of policy, pays out on diagnosis of several so-called "dread" diseases, including cancer, sudden strokes and heart attacks.

IT'S MAKE YOUR MIND UP TIME!

THE BBC NEWS GENERAL ELECTION GUIDE



THE BBC'S EXPERTS GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE ISSUES

With less than a week to go until the Election, cut your way through the blizzard of rhetoric with the BBC News General Election Guide. Written by 24 of the BBC's top journalists including:

- JOHN HUMPHRIES
- PETER SNOW
- DAVID DIMBLEBY
- ROBIN OAKLEY

it is the only impartial guide to the essential issues.

Priced at £5.99, it is available from all good bookshops. Or call 0181-307 4103 for further information.

HarperCollins Publishers

THIS SATURDAY IN THE LONG WEEKEND



GUERNICA

Decoding Picasso 60 years after the bombing

PLUS: In The eye

Why do they nick Terry Pratchett's books?

HOME PHONE TO MOBILE PHONE? IT'S CHEAPER WITH MERCURY.

Calling a mobile can be an expensive business. But it needn't be. With Mercury SmartCall you can save up to 15%, when compared to BT's basic rate. You keep your phone, your number and your BT line. All we'll change is the size of your bill. So get moving, call us now.

FreeCall 0500 500 366
quoting ref. RSINDMF

MERCURY

A CABLE & WIRELESS COMPANY

Savings correct as at 2 April 1997, compared to BT's basic rate for calls of 5 minutes, 6pm to 8am weekdays and any time at weekends. All calls are subject to a 1.5p connection charge, inc. VAT at 17.5%. Savings vary according to network provider.



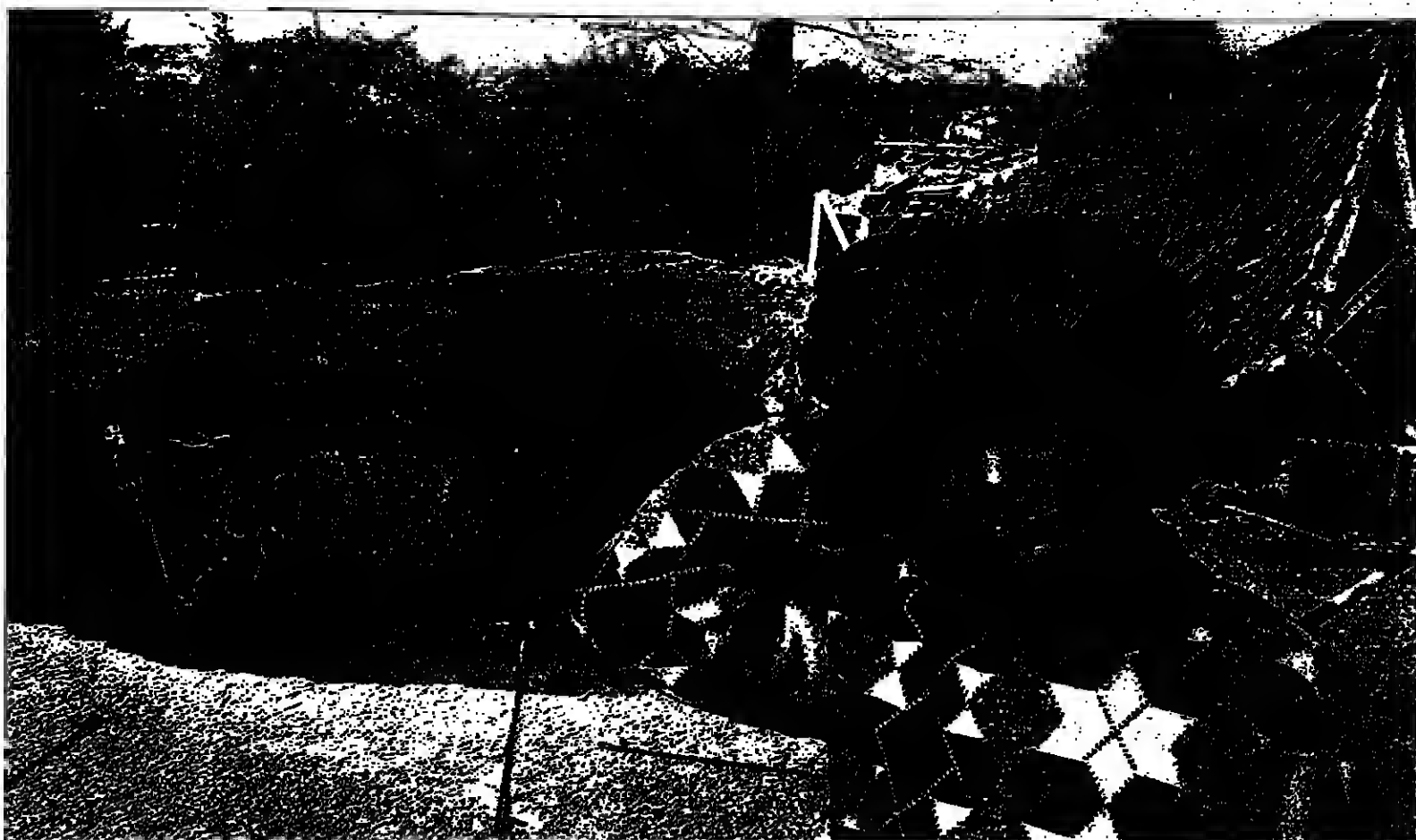
Families in a hole as the earth opens up

Esther Leach

A hole in the ground big enough to swallow a house developed overnight in Ripon, North Yorkshire, forcing at least five families to leave their homes. The hole, thought to be a naturally occurring cavern, opened up minutes after two children who had been playing on the site were called in by their mother. It grew bigger overnight and a nearby house garage fell into the chasm, which was filled with water.

Jane Sherwood-Britton, whose £95,000 house in Ure Bank Terrace faces the hole, said she had lost everything. "Our house is not safe to live in and it's now worthless. The hole appeared at about 7pm just as I called my children in. We called the emergency services and we were told to evacuate, but I stayed overnight. I just didn't want to leave my home."

"At 2am I heard a loud whirring noise, water shot up



Close shave: Jane Sherwood-Britton and the 40ft-deep hole that appeared in her garden, wrecking the garage

Photograph: Peter Byrne/Guzzell

into the air and the garage slipped into the hole. It was like a whirlpool."

Mrs Shepherd-Britton is staying with friends nearby and is taking legal advice.

A spokesman for Harrogate council said officials were investigating the cause of the sudden appearance of the hole. They believe it could be a geological fault involving gypsum,

which is dissolved by water and can cause sudden collapse, especially if found close to the surface of the ground. John Kirkman, chief building control officer for the council, said:

"People have been instructed to move out of their homes in the interests of their own safety. We are monitoring the situation and until insurance engineers and independent engineers can assess

the level of danger they cannot move back in." Gas and electric companies were on standby to switch off supplies to the street at a moment's notice and police have sealed off the area.

Solvents can cause damage to nerves

Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

Users of paints, glues or cleaning agents containing solvents may suffer damage to their nervous systems if they do not protect themselves, scientists say.

Solvents commonly used at work and in the home can cause serious long-term neurological damage when inhaled or brought into contact with the skin. Studies show that people exposed to the chemicals have suffered symptoms ranging from tingling and numbness to muscle weakness and loss of feeling.

In more advanced cases, when the brain is affected, the symptoms may mimic those of multiple sclerosis or dementia, with loss of memory, inability to think clearly and depression. One high-dose exposure or low-level exposure over a long period can be enough to cause damage.

Professor Roberta White and Dr Susan Proctor, environmental health experts at the University of Boston, in Massachusetts, say in the *Lancet* that almost 10 million people in the United States have daily contact with solvents and the number is rising with increasing use of the chemicals in new

technologies. Workers in solvent-using industries, such as paint production, car manufacture and dry-cleaning are at greatest risk of nerve damage, but people using paints and glues at home may also be at risk, they say.

Many of those affected recover spontaneously as soon as they stop using the chemicals but for others in whom symptoms persist, treatments are limited.

Patients whose moods have been affected may be helped by therapy and anti-depressant drugs.

The authors say prevention is essential by ensuring levels of solvents in the air are kept low and that workers wear masks.

They cite the case of a 50-year-old glazier who had spent his professional life working with solvents but never used a respirator and had only worn gloves for two years.

He suffered numb fingers, headaches, dizziness, depression and impotence.

He was advised to stop work and one year later reported a remarkable improvement in mood and said the outside world seemed clearer.

However, he still felt irritable, had a poor memory and had lost his sense of smell.

DAILY POEM

Poem of the Summer Angels

for Annette - who lent me the Round House for two perfect days

By William Haywood

They came so gently I was not afraid
Nor spent in dizzy and remote excess
They came in every swimming of the light
Among the beech cathedrals, where each bell
Rings out its certain note. They came like bees
Seducing the enraptured peonies.
They came in silences as cool as lakes
Under a woodland moon, where wild duck make
Quick shafts across the sky or nightlong doze
In reedy pools that cup the rippling stars.
They came like buried childhoods in the hills
The bird-tongued air the land that walks away
To solitudes stronger than any gods.
They came in peace, to tell me what I know.
May they come so for you.

This poem completes our selection from *Earth Ascending*, edited by Jay Ramsay (Stride, £9.50). On Monday, 28 April, we will publish the winning poem in the 1997 Peterloo Poets open competition: *Alice and the Birds*, by Anna Crowe.

Petronella Wyatt runs off with Imran Khan.

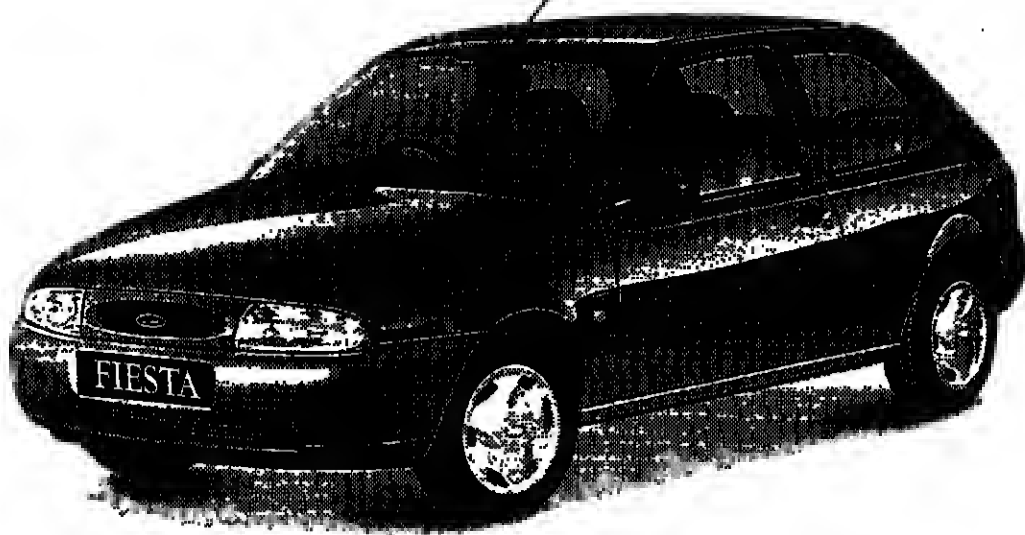
"THE WOMAN CALLED OUT, 'ELEANOR, IT'S THAT JEMIMY.' ELEANOR PULLED AT MY JACKET. 'DON'T YOU LOOK SMART. BUT WHERE'S YOUR OLD MAN?'"

Petronella Wyatt goes in search of the Goldsmith campaign against David Mellor in Putney and gets mistaken for Jemima Khan. Plus other local election lunacy. Only in *The Spectator*, out today.

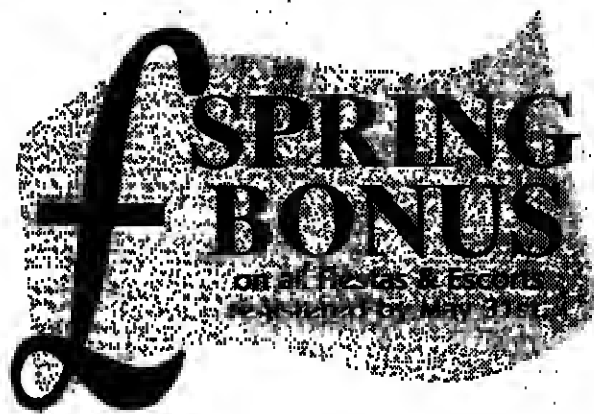
THE SPECTATOR

An ice-pack for the brow of a fazed electorate

Take off pounds for the summer.



FIESTA AZURA
(WITH SPRING BONUS) **£7,595**
ON THE ROAD OR £99 PER MONTH 10.1% APR.
(plus deposit & optional final payment)



FIESTA 1.3LX 3dr **£8,695**
(WITH SPRING BONUS)
ON THE ROAD OR £122 PER MONTH 10.1% APR.

ESCORT 1.4LX **£10,995**
(WITH SPRING BONUS)
4dr, 5dr OR ESTATE ON THE ROAD NOW

ESCORT 1.6 Si **£11,995**
(WITH SPRING BONUS)
5dr OR ESTATE ON THE ROAD NOW

**0% APR
ON ALL ESCORTS
& MONDEOS**

Options	1.3 3dr Fiesta Azura	1.3 3dr Fiesta LX
Mileage (per annum)	9,000 p.a.	19,000 p.a.
Recommended retail price*	£7,775.00	£8,830.00
Estimated on the road price**	£7,595.00	£8,695.00
Deposit (30%)	£2,278.50	£2,608.50
Balance	£5,316.50	£6,086.50
Total charge for credit†	£921.86	£1,098.09
Total amount payable	£6,238.36	£7,184.59
Term (months)	95	95
Number of monthly payments	94	94
Monthly payment	£66.89	£75.13
Optional final payment to purchase (Minimum Guaranteed Future Value**)	£3,810.00	£4,150.00
APR	10.2%	10.1%



ESCORT AZURA
(WITH SPRING BONUS) **£9,395**
ON THE ROAD.

**PRICES END 31st MAY SO SPRING INTO ACTION
AND VISIT YOUR FORD DEALER NOW.**

For details of your nearest Ford Dealer call 0345 55 22 77

FORD DEALERS



Subject to availability. *Manufacturer's Recommended Retail Price including VAT at 17.5% as at 1 April 1997. **Includes VAT and £648 covering delivery to dealer, 18 months road fund licence and estimated cost of number plates. †Total charge for credit includes an administration fee of £25 (incl. VAT), payable with the first monthly payment. ‡Further charges may be made subject to mileage and condition if the vehicle is returned at the end of the agreement. †††When quotations are available on request from Ford Credit Finance plc, PO Box 46, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 3AP. Guarantees and indemnities may be required. Finance is provided subject to status to over 18's only. Certain categories of business users are ineligible. Excludes fleets over 25 units. 0% APR excludes Ford Privilege. Ends 31.05.97. Spring Bonuses include VAT (Fiesta £340.43 + VAT & Escort £495.53 + VAT) and are available on all Fiesta and pre 97/ model year Escorts. There is no agreement between dealers to charge any specific price.

تحتفظ من الأصل

election '97

Tories use tax as the fear factor

Party leaders trade blows over fiscal policy

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

An exchange of Labour "fibs" and Tory "evasions" marked the start of the final week of election campaigning yesterday as John Major and Tony Blair tried to scare the voters.

The Conservative leader warned that if Labour was elected, their promised July Budget would include a tax package that could raise £12bn. The Labour leader said later that the Conservatives were addicted to value-added tax, and they planned to slap VAT on food.

Mr Major denied any intention of doing that, bluntly calling the Labour allegation "a lie". But he did not answer a direct question about extending VAT to other basic items, like children's clothes, or books.

"We have no need to raise taxation," he said. "We have set out spending plans and taxation plans and there is no need to get involved in ruling out VAT. I do not believe it is going to be necessary."

Mr Major said: "What is now self-evidently the case is that they propose to speed the last week of this campaign frightening the sick, frightening the elderly, frightening the vulnerable by spreading deliberate fibs and scare stories they know have absolutely no basis whatsoever."

As for Labour warnings that the Tories proposed to privatise state pensions, Mr Major said that was "absolutely scurrilous".

Conservative governments had up-rated the state pension each year, and would continue to do so, he said. "There is not a shred of basis in fact for the scares they have been putting about," he added.

But while both leaders have attacked each other for using scare tactics, both yesterday tried to put the frighteners on the electorate.

Referring to Labour's planned windfall tax on privatised utilities, Mr Major said it was a tax which "they cynically claim wouldn't hurt anybody".

He said that was not true; people would be hurt by it. "It would put up the cost of mak-

ing a telephone call or heating a room with gas or electric stove. It would hit pensioners and cut the value of shares held by millions of savers."

That was just "for starters". Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, then issued a "memorandum" of tax increases that Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, could choose to use, to fill the alleged £12bn "black hole" between his spending and revenue plans.

He said that Labour would need to increase taxes by £640 a year for every household in the country to balance the books.

However, when Mr Major was asked for his plans on the tax burden, he did not answer the question, and the answers to repeated questions on VAT did not provide any assurance that the VAT base would not be extended, or that VAT rates would rise.

The shadow Chancellor said Mr Major had spent the election evading the answer. "From now until election day, the Prime Minister must be bound until he matches Labour's commitment not to extend VAT to food, children's clothing, public transport fares, and books and newspapers."

"If he fails to do so, the British people will know what to expect from a fifth term Tory Government - more on VAT essentials."

Mr Blair told *The Independent* at his election press conference: "If we can get the tax burden down for ordinary families of course we want to do that. But we are wary of making guarantees to people precisely because we do not want to repeat the mistakes Mr Major made in the last election."

He added that he was also wary because "we are going to inherit a situation where the public finances are in a very, very poor state ..."

"But of course a 10 pence starting rate of [income] tax would help [ordinary families] and I think if we possibly can help them we should." He said that if there was scope for tax cuts under a Labour Government, that is where it would be done.



Now we're really motoring: John and Norma Major trying out an XK8 during their visit to the Jaguar factory in Coventry Photograph: Tom Pilsford

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major will make himself the message tonight with an election broadcast aimed at winning back doubting Tory voters.

The election broadcast was filmed last night at Downing Street by the Prime Minister who curtailed a day of campaigning in the Midlands and the North-east to begin a media blitz.

The Prime Minister's broadcast which will go out tonight will be in sharp contrast to Labour's "Tory Blair: The Movie" - screened last night. The script was agreed by the Prime Minister after talks with Lord Saatchi late on Wednesday night during a return flight from Scotland.

"Our strategy is to show what it could be like under a Labour government. It is part of a big media push," said one senior Conservative source.

The Prime Minister will under-

Major is the message in search for floaters

derline his warnings that a Labour government would threaten prosperity and sign up to a federal Europe - two issues which Tory strategists believe have been making wavering supporters think again in the final days of the campaign.

It will be followed up by the Prime Minister in a series of television interviews on Sunday, the BBC *Panorama* programme on Monday, and Radio 1 on Tuesday.

Tory party strategists believe Labour will enter the final week of the campaign by changing the emphasis to the "rewards" of a Labour government, focusing on their five pledges including

taking 250,000 young people off the dole.

That strategy was set out in Labour's "war book", but the Tories are keen to use Mr Major's personal popularity to persuade the "do-it-knows" to turn back to the Tories.

Mr Major privately concedes that he wished he had been able to speak more directly to more people but he continued to insist yesterday that the message on the doorstep was different from the polls.

He is refusing to give up in the face of expected defeat, as he did in 1992, although he is clearly looking as though the long campaign has taken its

toll on his reserves of energy.

He toured the Jaguar plant in Coventry with his wife, Norma, to underline the economic changes which have taken place since the days of Red Robbo and demarcation disputes. He sat behind the wheel of a Tory blue XK8 sports car costing £56,625 but Mrs Major, who drives a Rover, said: "John doesn't earn enough to buy a Jaguar."

If he loses next Thursday, that may change.

Mr Major has not been allowed to drive a car since becoming Prime Minister in November 1990, for security reasons, but he may be given

new freedom to do so if the Tories are forced into opposition.

He may also soon be able to afford the Jaguar.

Close friends have predicted that after delaying standing down to prevent an unseemly scramble for the leadership, he may go back to the City, possibly returning to his former career in banking.

It is possible he could still play an important role, even out of office, in the development of a single currency. Executives at Siemens have made it clear they support the single currency and Jaguar executives were also in favour of the "wait and see" approach.

Bibiano Boerio, the finance director of Jaguar, said: "From my personal perspective, it's probably something you need to keep shaping and managing."

"I'm a fighter and if you have an idea where you want to be, it's best to be involved and to help shape it."

BNP election film censored by C4

Christian Wolmar
Westminster correspondent

Channel 4 is refusing to show a British National Party election broadcast in full tonight even though the same broadcast will be shown largely uncensored by BBC and ITV.

The embarrassing disparity between the channels comes after broadcasters successfully challenged the Prolife Alliance, which is fielding 56 candidates in the election, over showing details of foetuses being aborted in its party political broadcast transmitted last night.

One of the sequences taken out of the BNP broadcast on Channel 4's insistence shows a London high street, and faces of black people who are identifiable, and the commentary asks "Do you want the rest of Britain to end up like this?"

The other shows a school in London's East End with signs in Urdu. Channel 4 argues that the scenes infringe Independent Television guidelines.

The BBC and ITV have not removed these sequences, but have taken out another in which a woman with three children is clearly identifiable. The BBC and ITV argue that they are not in breach of guidelines and that it would not be feasible to ask everyone shown in the broadcast whether the BNP had asked their permission to be filmed. This is the ground on which Channel 4 has censored the broadcast.

A spokesman for Channel 5 said last night: "We will be looking at both the ITV/BBC version and the Channel 4 version and decide whether either is legal and can be transmitted."

The confusion shows the lack of clarity of the law which is to be challenged by the Prolife Alliance after its High Court defeat yesterday. The alliance attempted to challenge a BBC decision to remove almost half its five-minute broadcast on the grounds that it would offend public taste. The extracts showed various parts of the process of an abortion but Judge Dyson said that the BBC was quite entitled to rule that the extracts would offend.

The judge said he recognised that freedom of expression was an important human right, but, having seen the offending transmission, he supported the BBC's decision. He described the film, which includes footage of what he said were "mangled and mutilated" aborted foetuses, as "indeed shocking".

The offending sections were blurred over with a statement saying that the broadcasting authorities had censored it and "if something is so horrifying that we are not allowed to see it, then perhaps we should not be tolerating it".

Josephine Quintavalle, spokeswoman for the alliance, said: "We are taking advice about appealing to Europe but it is obviously too late for this broadcast. We see this as a wider issue than pro-life. We are very concerned that a few media people have control over political expression."

The alliance last night put the full uncensored version of the broadcast on its site on the internet.

Windfalls ripe for the picking

Kenneth Clarke set out a menu of options for Labour tax increases yesterday, but some of them would do just as well for a Tory Chancellor as a Labour one. Here is a list of choices facing a government of any complexion wanting to raise extra revenue.

Restrict personal allowances to basic rate	£1.8bn
Restrict pension tax relief to basic rate	£1.3bn
Abolish married couple's allowance	£2.8bn
Abolish mortgage interest relief	£2.4bn
Abolish exemption of child benefit from tax	£700m
Abolish exemption of incapacity benefit from tax	£550m
Extend VAT to private education and health	£1.5bn
Increase corporation tax rate by 1 per cent	£650m
Cut rate of advance corporation tax credit by 1 per cent	£250m
End tax exemption of first £20,000 redundancy pay	£1.3bn
Extend VAT to rent on domestic dwellings	£3bn
Extend VAT to rent on commercial properties	£1.3bn
Extend VAT to betting, gaming and lottery	£200m
Extend VAT to domestic passenger fares	£1.45bn
Extend VAT to international passenger fares	£1.2bn
Extend VAT to children's clothing	£800m
Extend VAT to water and sewerage services	£300m

Colin Brown

Tony Blair will be targeted for an intensified attack by Tory party leaders in the final push for the last seven days of the general election campaign.

Tory strategists privately say they have identified Mr Blair as one of the key targets in order to undermine Labour's election campaign and restore confidence in floating Tory voters.

John Major will step up his assault on Mr Blair's U-turns over policy, including Scottish devolution, but will leave the more personal attacks to leading spokesmen, such as the party chairman, Brian Mawhinney.

The personal attacks on Mr Blair, which have included advertisements showing the

Labour leader as a ventriloquist's dummy on German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's knee, have caused outrage but Tory strategists believe they are striking a chord with voters.

"We are finding in our polls that people are increasingly concerned at Blair's changes of policy. He looks tetchy under fire. We think he is frightened by the prospect of office and we are confident that the contrast between Major and Blair is going to damage Labour," said one Tory source.

"There is a growing feeling that we are hitting home where we compare Steady John against Slippery Tony. We are appealing over the heads of the media and it is getting home to the people on the streets."

The campaign, which will intensify over the weekend, with Mr Blair on Saturday, will also focus on what the Tories claim is the "spiral of silence" by Labour over its economic plans, including a proposed June budget. They will attack Labour for failing to show where the money is going to come from to plug the alleged £1.5bn black hole in Gordon Brown's plans.

The economy has been the main theme of the Conservative campaign, with the slogan "Britain is Booming". Tory strategists believe the election is beginning to have its effect on the opinion polls but will also link it to evidence of widespread Euro-scepticism.

Mr Major will attack Mr Blair for threatening to give away British sovereignty at the same time as risking more job losses. "We are going to go on Europe, Europe and Europe," Europe is big and doing us well," said the source.

Conservative tracking polls showed the gap with Labour fell from 11 to six-and-a-half per cent at the start of the week, after heavy attacks on Labour over Europe. Mirroring the ICM poll in the *Guardian*, the Tory tracking poll showed Labour's lead had slipped to five points, which the Tory strategists said had raised morale at Central Office. "We feel that we can really do it now."

Mr Major continued to play down the polls yesterday and said it was too early to say what

the result of the election would be. But he warned: "The election on the doorstep will be very hard fought."

Although he has professed his confidence that he will win, Mr Major said yesterday: "I don't think anyone can predict with any certainty what the result will be."

Last night, he launched the final push by staking his hopes for victory on a twin attack on Mr Blair over his approach to Europe and the Scottish parliament. In spite of Cabinet splits over Europe between Kenneth Clarke and Michael Howard, Conservative strategists believe the voters have discounted the disunity factor and that their Euro-sceptic message is sinking in.

THE HURRIED VOTER'S GUIDE

THE CAMPAIGN

The Liberal Democrats began "Take Our Daughters to Work" day by highlighting new evidence from the Fawcett Society during the election campaign. The party launched its own plans to get a fair deal for women both at home and at work.

Meanwhile, the other two parties continued to trade blows over pensions, VAT and the economy. While the Conservatives claimed Labour's plans would leave a £12bn "black hole" in the public finances, Labour claimed the Conservatives' plans would cost £15bn.

Labour unveiled its eagerly-awaited video endorsement from businessman Alan Sugar before its leader, Tony Blair, promised a future of "one nation" politics for Britain.

Answering questions, Mr Blair repeated allegations that under the Conservatives the state pension would not be safe and that VAT could be imposed on such things as food and public transport. These claims were later hotly denied by the Conservatives.

John Major, meanwhile, removed himself to Coventry and Teesside, where he made a series of visits aimed at showing a booming economy.

He claimed Labour would put the country's competitiveness at risk by importing European-style industrial policies and tax levels - the European Social Model.

KEY ARGUMENTS

Both Labour and the Conservatives were in fighting mood.

Tony Blair began the day with the spectre of a fifth-term Tory government. "The choice is very simple. You either wake up [on 2 May] to the same old Tories who have got away with everything they wanted to, or a new start under Labour," he said.

Later Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, hit back. "A rabbit caught in the headlights looks positively relaxed when compared with Mr Blair answering a question on economics."

Meanwhile another Conservative, the Chancellor Kenneth Clarke, was content to leave personal attacks to his colleagues. He was more interested in blowing his own trumpet.

"Immodestly - you are allowed to be immodest in elections - I lay claim to being the most successful Chancellor of the Exchequer since the war," he told the BBC's *Today* programme.

Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrats' treasury spokesman, was in equally upbeat mood during a BBC radio phone-in.

"If the people of this country want a Liberal Democrat government - and millions do - they can still vote one in," he said.

GOOD DAY



Paddy Ashdown got a boost when an opinion poll revealed 13 per cent of voters thought the Liberal Democrats had "run the most effective campaign so far".

Conservative MP John Grieve, who was seen in a TV interview, came when Lady Angela Barry, daughter of the former prime minister, also spoke. She was seen in a TV interview, also, when she was seen in a TV interview, also.

ONE TO REMEMBER

Voters were offered something to look forward to yesterday when John Prescott announced that he and Tony Blair would dance round a maypole in Downing Street after the election in return for people coming out to vote Labour. "Tony Blair and I will dance around that maypole in Downing Street - providing we get everyone out to vote," he told voters in Tynemouth. "So let's go around knocking on doors."

BAD DAY



Conservative candidate Jerry Hayes was recovering after being hospitalised for the second time in the election campaign. He made the mistake of sitting his hand through a firebox while delivering an election communication. The dog on the other side was tough on leaflets and tough on the causes of leaflets.

Mr Hayes visited hospital after this month after being punched in the face by a stranger while he was canvassing.

HOGWASH



Pledge by Labour's Jack Cunningham: "Within a decade we could see Britain back where it should be, among the top 10 in the Olympics. I'm not saying number one or number two, but at least in the top 10, the place that we used to hold some years ago". Liberal Democrat sports spokesman Mervyn Campbell could not resist responding: "Only Liberal Democrats are going for gold by providing real resources to make the difference to sport in schools."

THE OTHER PARTIES

The Prolife Alliance lost its bid for permission to fight a decision by television stations to screen its party political broadcast. A High Court judge ruled that there were "no grounds" for a judicial review.

Meanwhile, today sees the launch of the Elvis Yours party. Included in their

MEDIA STAR



Sulaiman Khan has more reason than the rest of us to be sick of the campaign. First his father, Imran Khan, launched a bid to become Prime Minister of Pakistan. Then his grandfather, Sir James Goldsmith, took it upon himself to warn the British people of the threat from Europe. Wheeled out onto the campaign trail on Putney Heath, Sulaiman could take it no more, and was sick all over his mother's chocolate-coloured dress, sending fazed party officials scurrying for the Wet Ones.

Vote for insanity, you know it makes sense

Matthew Brice

Britain is not booming, it is barking-barking mad. Ask anyone standing on Westminster Bridge yesterday afternoon in the presence of Screaming Lord Sutch and 30 candidates standing for his Official Monster Raving Loony Party.

With the slogan "Vote for insanity: you know it makes sense", Lord Sutch launched his party's manifesto, spelling out a brighter future for the nation. On health: free prescriptions, dental treatment and hearing aids and the compulsory wearing of wigs. On crime: standard-issue tandems for traf-



Mad? John-Major lookalike Peter Friel posing with Monster Raving Loony 'Batwoman' on Westminster Bridge yesterday. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

fic police involved in high-speed pursuits. On education: a return to basics - the four Rs of reading, writing, rock and roll. And, on the burning issue of Europe: butter mountains to be made available for training British Olympic skiers, a ministry for

pets to be responsible for issuing passports, and a single currency, the yahoo.

Some Loony policies are not quite as mad as they make out. A proposal to introduce special ramps on the backs of buses to allow easier access for the el-

derly and disabled was tested out by Steven Norris, the Conservatives' transport minister last year.

However, all is not well at Loony Headquarters - Bob's Goodtime Blues bar in west London. Lord Sutch himself,

veteran rock 'n' roll star and *bon vivant*, has had to pull out of his own personal campaign to look after his elderly mother who has suffered a fall. And another of his candidates has run into hostility. Organisers of an election meeting in the Bradford North

constituency last night banned Sutch's man, Wild Willi Beckett, from attending, saying they want to cover serious issues. Conservative, Lib Dem and Labour candidates will all get a fair hearing while Wild Willi is said to be wild with rage.

Labour still 18 points ahead

John Rentoul

After the headlines generated by ICM's dramatic mid-week poll, today's *Independent/Harris* poll shows Labour's lead unchanged at 18 percentage points, in line with other polls painting a placid picture of public opinion.

But, while most pollsters are confident that the trend shown by ICM was due to statistical error, they are all nervous about the levels of party support.

Tom Simpson, managing director of Harris, is working on estimates of what would happen if there were a late swing to the Conservatives of the same order as in 1992. On average, the final polls were nine points adrift then, with about one-third of the error down to out-of-date information about the make-up of the electorate. So if voters have the same last-minute change of heart as five years ago, Labour's lead may end up being six points lower than in the opinion polls.

"Now the same factors may not be at work, but it would be a legitimate exercise to do alongside our final poll next week," Mr Simpson said. But on Harris's numbers today it would only cut Labour's lead to 12 points, and leave Tony Blair with a Commons majority of just over 100 seats.

The unusual feature of Harris's polls in the run-up to this election is that the number of don't knows has risen during the campaign, instead of falling as expected. From 12 per cent five weeks ago, 16 per cent are now saying they do not know how they will vote.

This feature, reflected in other polls, has been seized on by the Tories as evidence that there is "all to play for". But many of these are already counted by the pollsters as "shy Tories" on the basis of how they say they voted last time, and who they think the best prime minister would be. Only MORI refuses to make this adjustment.

Today's *Independent/Harris* survey also continues to suggest the Labour vote is firmer than the Tories'. Of Labour voters, 80 per cent say they are "certain to vote Labour", while only 60 per cent of Tories say they are "certain to vote Conservative". Twice as many Tories (29 per cent) as Labour supporters (15 per cent) say "there is a chance that I may change my mind before I vote".

The Liberal Democrats are the most popular second choice among potential switchers (28

per cent of waverers name the Lib-Dems, 17 per cent Labour, 14 per cent Tories).

There remains the puzzle of why ICM consistently put Labour lower, and the Tories and Liberal Democrats higher, than the other polls. Nick Sparrow, ICM managing director, attributes the difference to random telephone interviewing.

But Gallup, which uses the same method, produces results more in line with the other companies whose interviewers speak to people face-to-face. Andy Brown, head of research at Gallup, claims his methods are superior to ICM's because telephone numbers are generated at random by computer, while ICM takes numbers at random from telephone directories and then adds another random number to the last digit. "ICM's method means they get fewer ex-directory numbers, because we know that ex-directory numbers tend to cluster together," Mr Brown said.

He added that, surprisingly, the one-third of the population which is ex-directory is more pro-Labour, reflecting the fact that they tend to be younger, unmarried, in rented housing and less likely to be in professional occupations.

Meanwhile, analysis of the last local council by-elections before the general election by Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher of Plymouth University, suggests a Labour lead of 13 points. This is lower than the opinion polls, but what is heartening for the Tories is that the same analysis just before the general election five years ago put the two main parties neck and neck. If that relationship holds good this time, Labour would win the general election by the same sort of margin at the five point lead in this week's ICM poll, pointing to a Labour majority of around 40 seats.

Harris Research interviewed 1,177 adults face-to-face in their homes between 18 and 21 April.

Lib Dems beat Tories in the campaign style

John Rentoul

The Liberal Democrats have beaten the Tories into third place when voters are asked which party has "run the most effective campaign so far", according to a MORI opinion poll.

In direct contrast to media commentators' view that Tony Blair has fought an uninspiring and error-prone campaign, 36 per cent of those surveyed said Labour had run the best campaign. Labour was well ahead of the Liberal Democrats on 13 per cent, who pushed the Tories into third place on 11 per cent.

The findings of the poll, carried out on Tuesday this week for the *Times*, are also at odds with the trend in party support in the polls over the five weeks of the campaign so far. Labour's average level of support has fallen slightly from just above 50 per cent when John Major called the election in mid-March to just below 50 per cent now.

But Paddy Ashdown's greater exposure during the campaign seems to have helped lift the Liberal Democrats, who have seen their poll ratings rise over the past five weeks. The average Tory poll rating has also risen slightly during the campaign, despite voters giving Mr Major's campaign a big thumbs-down.

Again contradicting most commentators, who have been impressed with the Prime Minister's bold and personal appeal to the nation, fewer voters are impressed by the Tory campaign

this time than were five years ago. Comparing the figures with those published on 30 March 1992, at the same stage of the last election campaign, suggests that Mr Ashdown is in fact doing worse than last time. In 1992, the Tories came in third on 13 per cent, but the Liberal Democrats were named by 28 per cent, only just behind the 31 per cent naming Neil Kinnock's second and more stilled Labour campaign.

This time, much of the media's attention has been taken by Mr Blair's uncertain start to the campaign. He was reported to be defensive in his *Panorama* interview with David Dimbleby and the "wobble" over the late change to party policy on privatisation attracted much coverage. Mr Ashdown is generally held to have had a good campaign. When given airtime, he is said to come across exceptionally well and Liberal Democrat policies are popular when people know about them.

Mr Major also impressed journalists with his decision to turn disunity over Europe into an impassioned plea to his party and the country to trust him to negotiate with Britain's European partners.

The other big difference between now and five years ago is that in 1992 only 26 per cent of those interviewed replied "none of them" or "don't know", against 37 per cent now.

Once again, it seems, the don't knows have it.

15% OFF WALLPAPERS AND BORDERS.

CLASSIC INTERIORS
Meadow Garden Collection Wallpaper
Was £5.99 £3.99
Save £2.00

£3.39

£2.54

CLASSIC INTERIORS
Meadow Garden Collection Border
Was £4.99 £2.99
Save £2.00

SOLVITE
Border
Adhesive with
Brush 15m
Was £4.99
Save 60p

£3.99

VYMURA Masquerade Vinyl Border
Selected Designs
Was £5.99 £4.99 Save £1.00

£4.24

VYMURA
Masquerade
Ready Pasted Vinyl
Selected Designs
Was £9.99 £6.99
Save £3.00

£5.94

HARRIS
Wallpaper
Hanging Set

£4.29

SUPER FRESCO Coloured
Textured Vinyl Pattern no. 12366
Was £9.99 £7.99 Save £2.00

£6.79

£5.09

CROWN
Bright Florals Border
Selected Designs
Was £3.99 £3.49 Save £0.50

£2.97

CROWN
Vive la Couleur
Collection
Wallpaper
Was £5.99
Save 90p

£4.24

CROWN
Bright Florals Wallpaper
Selected Designs
Was £5.99 £4.99
Save £1.00

£3.89

SOLVITE
Ready Mixed Adhesive 1kg
Was £4.99 Save 50p

CONTOUR
Sculptured Vinyl
Paper
Selected Designs
Was £10.99 £8.99
Save £2.00

£7.64

SUPER FRESCO
Coloured Textured Vinyl
Pattern no. 14227
Was £7.99 £6.99
Save £1.00

£5.94

PLYWOOD Pasting Table
Was £13.49
Save £2

£11.49

EARLEX
Steam Plus
Was £49.99
Save £10

£39.99

HOMEBASE
Metropolitan Collection Self Adhesive Border
10m Roll Was £3.99 £2.99 Save £1.00

£5.94

HOMEBASE
Metropolitan Collection Ready
Pasted Vinyl Was £8.99 £6.99
Save £2.00

£5.94

HOMEBASE

MONDAY-THURSDAY 8AM-8PM • FRIDAY 8AM-9PM • SATURDAY 8AM-8PM • SUNDAY 10AM-4PM

OFFER VALID FROM 21ST APRIL - 17TH MAY 1997. Prices marked include 12% discount, applies to wallpapers and borders only. Minimum spend £40. Please see leaflet for details. All items are approximate and not to scale. Merchandise subject to availability. Products and offers may vary in Northern Ireland and Eire. Stores in Scotland open Sunday 9am-6pm. Opening times may vary. Please call 0845 801 800 during office hours for details of your nearest store.

John Rentoul

Ashdown ditches campaign for crusade

Barrie Clement

Ahead of one of the most intense campaigns conducted by a British politician, Paddy Ashdown last night launched what he described as a crusade for a new politics. Casting aside any suggestion that the electorate might vote tactically to get rid of the Conservatives, Mr Ashdown called on electors to maximise the vote for Liberal Democrats throughout the country.

A vote for his party was a vote for "victory," he told a rally in Edinburgh. "I am not saying that there was no chance of him entering 10 Downing Street, he made it clear that the victory he had in mind was a 'massive force' of Liberal Democrat MPs who would fight for real improvements in education and the health service. While Mr Ashdown's party has picked up support during the hustings, most polls put them three or four per-

centage points behind the 18 per cent vote they attracted in the last general election.

The speech was meant to launch the last seven days of his campaign, during which he will visit 30 constituencies all over the country. Mr Ashdown will once more don his man-of-action mantle in the three days up to polling day, dashing around in a helicopter. Next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday he will visit more than 20 seats.

Betraying a degree of irritation over suggestions by disillusioned Tory and Labour supporters that a vote for the Liberal Democrats was "wasted," he said the only vote which counted was for policies people believed in.

"If you want better schools, then the only way you will get them is by voting Liberal Democrat. The vote that doesn't count, that won't make the difference, is the Conservative or Labour vote - because they

won't do anything about the cuts, the sacked teachers, the rising classes in our schools."

There was very little to choose between Labour and the Tories - they had the same spending limits, the same tax plans and the same failure to explain how improvements would be paid for. The Liberal Democrats attached price tags to their promises, he said.

"The Labour Party has decided to fight this election on the awe-inspiring message: New Labour - no difference." Both Tories and Labour made impossible promises of lower taxes and better services, he said, pointing out that they had been in power for 50 years, but neither had made any real difference. "Don't vote for more of the same. Don't be fooled into voting from fear, vote for the things you believe in."

He said it was time for more than just a campaign. "Campaigns are short-term. They are about winning votes. Crusades are about beliefs. They are about the long term."

Given that his party had been out of power for half-a-century, Mr Ashdown named Gladstone and Lloyd George as role models for his new politics. Earlier in the day, Mr Ashdown visited the 1,600-pupil Cocksbut Hill comprehensive school in Yardley, a three-way marginal in Birmingham. The headteacher, David Gentle, showed him a newly built science block which had cost £500,000 but which teachers believed was badly designed.

The silent revolutionaries



Battle-hardened: Tony Benn in his Chesterfield constituency. "I'm a soldier in the middle of a war. I wouldn't want to discuss my view of the generals" Photograph: David Rose

Kathy Marks

The fax machine in the kitchen of Tony Benn's constituency home whirs into action. "Ah, here come my instructions from Millbank Tower, telling me what to say about everything," he observes. "They get sent to all the candidates twice a day. I file them away very carefully."

Mr Benn already knows what he wants to tell the people of Chesterfield, the Derbyshire market town he has represented since 1984. His election poster declares that he will "conscientiously work as a committed socialist" for "full employment ... a big, house-building programme ... a fairer tax system ... trade union rights".

These are not the kind of pledges that are found in the Labour Party manifesto. Then

Tea-drinking prophet keeps his profile low and expectations high

again, Mr Benn has never been noted for being a conformist. The prophet of the hard left is fighting his seventeenth campaign. He entered Parliament in 1950, when Tony Blair was not yet a twinkle in his father's eye, and has more ministerial experience than any other MP in the Labour ranks.

Now 72, Mr Benn has no plans to retire. One reason is his attachment to Chesterfield, the former mining town that gave him refuge after he lost his Bristol constituency.

He has even been spotted this week wearing a blue rosette

- in support of his local Second Division football team, which made it to the FA Cup semi-finals.

"There is something to be said for experience without ambition," he says, puffing on his pipe. "Anyway, there are nine million pensioners and they're entitled to be represented in Parliament."

It must be said that Tony Benn looks fighting fit. He darts around his flat in the grounds of Chesterfield Labour Club, making endless cups of the drink that fuels him from morning to night: tea. "They've

introduced a new pyramid tea bag, have you seen them?" he enthuses. On the wall is a painting of a Yorkshire pit village, a present from Arthur Scargill.

He rails with unflagging energy against his favourite demons: Brussels, the global economy, the profit motive. The only hint of declining mental agility comes when he tries to recall the country where Kenneth Kaunda was president. "This is what they call a senior moment. It'll come back to me in the night."

This is the man who 18 months ago accused Mr Blair

of trying to destroy socialism. In 1992, he said the Labour Party had lost the election because it was too right wing. But for now, like others on the far left, Mr Benn is keeping his own counsel.

"I'm a soldier in the middle of a war," he says. "If I was putting on my tin hat and getting into the landing craft on D-Day, I wouldn't want to discuss my view of the generals. At the moment, the most important thing is to get rid of a government that has inflicted the most horrific damage on this country."

He cannot, though, avoid the occasional barbed comment. Discussing Edward Heath, he says he respects him because he is consistent. "The people I cannot abide are those who haven't got an opinion until they read the latest Gallup poll." He observes that Nelson Mandela did not succeed "because he had a spin doctor or a new suit".

And, although careful not to predict future party divisions, he warns that a Labour government would face high expectations. "Popular aspirations will surface. It's going to be a hairy time."

Mr Benn says he no longer wants or expects office. "If there are voices to be heard, they're probably better heard with freedom," he adds, ominously. His silence is unlikely to last much beyond 2 May.

Anti-racist measures promised by Blair

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Tony Blair last night issued a warning that active racism would face a new offence of racial harassment, and a new crime of racially motivated violence under a Labour government.

Interviewed on ZEE TV, the Asian satellite and cable channel, the Labour leader indicated that any government led by him would take tough action against racial attacks.

The Labour manifesto says: "Britain is a multicultural and multiracial society. All its members must have the protection of the law." But Mr Blair was forced to defend the controversial use of a bulldog - a symbol associated with the extreme right British National Party - in one of his party's election broadcasts.

The use of Fitz the bulldog was a calculated move to demonstrate Labour patriotism - but it was seen as too nationalist by some critics. Mr Blair was told in the interview that the bulldog would strike fear into the hearts of ethnic minorities because of its link with the BNP, and he was asked whether its use was not "insensitive".

The Labour leader said: "I hope people don't look on it in that way, and I am sure they don't. The Labour Party's commitment to anti-racism is very

clear and well-established. So I hope people take it in the spirit in which it is intended - to symbolise a Britain that's having tremendous difficulties under the Conservative government, with drift instead of leadership, and with the country being run for the few, not the many."

Mr Blair went on to repeat the "one nation" theme that he had played very hard at his morning press conference. "The Labour Party had to become a truly one-nation party," he said. "We are the party that represents people from all walks of life today in Britain." Since the Tories had come to power in 1979, he said, they had not built one nation. "There's greater division now than ever before." He said a massive difference could be made to the country if there was a different government.

On immigration, Mr Blair said: "There have to be firm controls, but they should be fair."

He rejected a suggestion that Asians were being obstructed in the Labour Party by disputes over membership irregularities and selection procedures.

"I am in favour of encouraging Asian people into the Labour Party. But it's always got to be done on a fair and proper basis," he said. "We stand to increase significantly the number of Asian MPs after the election."

HOW I WILL VOTE: MARK WIGGLESWORTH

Searching for a sense of society

Mark Wigglesworth, conductor, is Music Director of the premiere Ensemble and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. He has worked with many of the world's leading orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic and the London Philharmonic.

How will you be voting?
Liberal Democrat

Why? Europe is important. I think they are the only party that sees Europe in terms of political co-operation. The other two parties are only interested in selling Europe in terms of how it benefits us as individuals. The whole idea that it could be good for people to work together is never really discussed. The Tories and Labour will only sell it to us if it is going to benefit our pockets.

Generally all the policies that the two main parties are selling are based on selfishness. That's very depressing: that people should vote based on what is best for them, rather than what is best for the community. The idea that tax is a dirty word is, I think, extraordinary. It benefits everybody to have good services. The amount of extra tax they are talking about is so little for the individual. People might think that they don't benefit from the transport system if they use their car, or they don't benefit from education if they don't have children, but we all benefit if society is strong.

The idea of co-operation and the fact that people may not simply be interested in their own bank accounts is an issue that only the Lib Dems are prepared to lead on. People only think they can make these promises because they will never get elected, but they seem the only party who see politicians as leaders rather than followers. The other parties react to the polls and do whatever people want in order to get elected whereas the Liberal party sticks its neck out in a far more admirable way.

What do you think of Paddy Ashdown?

To be honest I don't think the people are that important: it's the philosophies that matter, and he embodies the philosophy of the party. All the leaders are intelligent people, but it's not so much a question of who they are, as what they believe in. Paddy Ashdown believes in a sense of community, a sense of society and a sense of future, though not just the immediate future.

The issue I feel most strongly about is PR. There are only 100 or so seats where your vote will make a difference, and for everybody else the vote is irrelevant and that is extraordinary. For the vast majority of



people the election is a waste of time, and that can't be right.

What do you think of tactical voting?

I'm all for tactical voting. I don't need to do it in my constituency because the Liberals are in second place. But I think Labour is closer to the Liberal party than the Tories. What I'd really like is for neither Labour nor the Tories to get a majority: then PR might become a reality. I think Tony Blair's attitude to PR will be conditioned by his majority. If he has a landslide victory there is no way PR will be high on his agenda. If he needs the Liberals then it probably will be, and I find that depressing because his band will have been forced, but the outcome is a potentially exciting one.

... while Red Ken goes on a Millbank diet

Kim Sengupta

Ken Livingstone was not saying anything much - not just because his mouth was full of mussels, but because the MP for Brent East is on the Millbank diet.

Apparently, Labour's spin doctors did not want the caustic critic of new Labour to be too voluble during the election campaign. So he is on a vow of silence. For the ever so loquacious former GLC leader, this is akin to a vow of celibacy by Steven Nouri.

"In 1992 they told me not to speak for five weeks," said Mr Livingstone. "This time no orders have arrived from Millbank. They don't directly send me any memos any longer, because I would tell them to sod off. But I am not going to say anything now, I don't want to be blamed if things go wrong. I may have plenty to say come May 2."

So though we have conducted an interview with him, it was entirely off the record. Here is how New Labour likes Ken to be quoted. What about his views on the leadership? He was hardly complimentary:

"He said: 'He could scarcely hide his amusement as he continued:'"

Asked whether Tony Blair was really a Tory, Livingstone let fly:



Bread and butter socialist: Ken Livingstone, who is finding new Labour not entirely to his taste Photograph: Brian Harris

before adding: "And that's what comes of too much spin doctoring." But what about the grip of the spin doctors on the campaign? At an earlier lunch, Mr Livingstone's friend

described the reaction he got whenever he walked into Millbank:

"Waving a glass of sancerre he smiled. 'The only things missing were the strings of garlic and the crucifix.'"

Mr Livingstone's public reticence on new Labour has excited his Tory opponent Mark Francois. "He has new Labour on his campaign leaflets, but we all know what he feels about

Tony Blair, he has been less than complimentary in the past. Does he really believe in the policies of new Labour? I doubt it." Mr Francois was a councillor at the home of Essex Man, Basilidon, for four years. He was

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
107
108
109
110
111
112
113
114
115
116
117
118
119
120
121
122
123
124
125
126
127
128
129
130
131
132
133
134
135
136
137
138
139
140
141
142
143
144
145
146
147
148
149
150
151
152
153
154
155
156
157
158
159
160
161
162
163
164
165
166
167
168
169
170
171
172
173
174
175
176
177
178
179
180
181
182
183
184
185
186
187
188
189
190
191
192
193
194
195
196
197
198
199
200
201
202
203
204
205
206
207
208
209
210
211
212
213
214
215
216
217
218
219
220
221
222
223
224
225
226
227
228
229
230
231
232
233
234
235
236
237
238
239
240
241
242
243
244
245
246
247
248
249
250
251
252
253
254
255
256
257
258
259
260
261
262
263
264
265
266
267
268
269
270
271
272
273
274
275
276
277
278
279
280
281
282
283
284
285
286
287
288
289
290
291
292
293
294
295
296
297
298
299
300
301
302
303
304
305
306
307
308
309
310
311
312
313
314
315
316
317
318
319
320
321
322
323
324
325
326
327
328
329
330
331
332
333
334
335
336
337
338
339
340
341
342
343
344
345
346
347
348
349
350
351
352
353
354
355
356
357
358
359
360
361
362
363
364
365
366
367
368
369
370
371
372
373
374
375
376
377
378
379
380
381
382
383
384
385
386
387
388
389
390
391
392
393
394
395
396
397
398
399
400
401
402
403
404
405
406
407
408
409
410
411
412
413
414
415
416
417
418
419
420
421
422
423
424
425
426
427
428
429
430
431
432
433
434
435
436
437
438
439
440
441
442
443
444
445
446
447
448
449
450
451
452
453
454
455
456
457
458
459
460
461
462
463
464
465
466
467
468
469
470
471
472
473
474
475
476
477
478
479
480
481
482
483
484
485
486
487
488
489
490
491
492
493
494
495
496
497
498
499
500
501
502
503
504
505
506
507
508
509
510
511
512
513
514
515
516
517
518
519
520
521
522
523
524
525
526
527
528
529
530
531
532
533
534
535
536
537
538
539
540
541
542
543
544
545
546
547
548
549
550
551
552
553
554
555
556
557
558
559
560
561
562
563
564
565
566
567
568
569
570
571
572
573
574
575
576
577
578
579
580
581
582
583
584
585
586
587
588
589
590
591
592
593
594
595
596
597
598
599
600
601
602
603
604
605
606
607
608
609
610
611
612
613
614
615
616
617
618
619
620
621
622
623
624
625
626
627
628
629
630
631
632
633
634
635
636
637
638
639
640
641
642
643
644
645
646
647
648
649
650
651
652
653
654
655
656
657
658
659
660
661
662
663
664
665
666
667
668
669
670
671
672
673
674
675
676
677
678
679
680
681
682
683
684
685
686
687
688
689
690
691
692
693
694
695
696
697
698
699
700
701
702
703
704
705
706
707
708
709
710
711
712
713
714
715
716
717
718
719
720
721
722
723
724
725
726
727
728
729
730
731
732
733
734
735
736
737
738
739
740
741
742
743
744
745
746
747
748
749
750
751
752
753
754
755
756
757
758
759
760
761
762
763
764
765
766
767
768
769
770
771
772
773
774
775
776
777
778
779
780
781
782
783
784
785
786
787
788
789
790
791
792
793
794
795
796
797
798
799
800
801
802
803
804
805
806
807
808
809
810
811
812
813
814
815
816
817
818
819
820
821
822
823
824
825
826
827
828
829
830
831
832
833
834
835
836
837
838
839
840
841
842
843
844
845
846
847
848
849
850
851
852
853
854
855
856
857
858
859
860
861
862
863
864
865
866
867
868
869
870
871
872
873
874
875
876
877
878
879
880
881
882
883
884
885
886
887
888
889
890
891
892
893
894
895
896
897
898
899
900
901
902
903
904
905
906
907
908
909
910
911
912
913
914
915
916
917
918
919
920
921
922
923
924
925
926
927
928
929
930
931
932
933
934
935
936
937
938
939
940
941
942
943
944
945
946
947
948
949
950
951
952
953
954
955
956
957
958
959
960
961
962
963
964
965
966
967
968
969
970
971
972
973
974
975
976
977
978
979
980
981
982
983
984
985
986
987
988
989
990
991
992
993
994
995
996
997
998
999
1000

election '97

Labour wants sports gold

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Labour has come up with the ultimate election promise – Britain would bring home Olympic gold under a Blair government, the party's heritage spokesman said yesterday.

"Within a decade we could see Britain back where it should be – among the top 10 in the Olympics. I'm not saying number one or number two, but at least in the top 10, the place that we used to hold some time ago," Jack Cunningham said.

He was pinned down to a specific pledge by Tom McNab, the

British Olympic coach, at the launch of Labour's sporting plans. Mr McNab had gone along, with a bevy of other sporting stars, to support the party's plans.

Acknowledging that things, to coin a phrase from Labour's campaign song, could only get better for Britain's sportsmen and women, Mr Cunningham blamed the Conservatives.

"We have examined the reasons why. We are not short of talent. We can fairly point the finger at the failure of the Tory government to nurture sporting achievement," he said.

Labour, he went on, would

put Britain back in the world sports superleague. Furthermore, it would fight to bring the World Cup and other major international events to Britain.

Among the guests at the launch was the runner Brendan Foster, who won numerous medals under the last Labour government including the gold in the 10,000 metres at the 1978 Commonwealth Games.

Mr Foster was joined by Tessa Sanderson, who threw the javelin at five Olympics and won gold at Los Angeles in 1984. Also present was Shaun Edwards, former captain of the Great Britain rugby league

team, Brian Moore, former England rugby union player and Judy Oakes, the international shot-putter.

Ms Sanderson said afterwards that she had voted Conservative at the last election but that she would be supporting Labour this time.

"Britain is very talented at sport. There are a lot of kids out there at grassroots who aren't getting the opportunities and I think Labour will try to do that," she said.

Labour has promised a range of measures, from a new emphasis on children's play to a new youth sports unit in the Department of National Heritage.

In a new document, *Labour's Sporting Vision*, the party called yesterday for an end to the sale of school playing fields, a more strategic approach to grants for sport, a better British Academy of Sport than the one offered by the Conservatives and a task-force for football.

Iain Sproat, the sports minister, was not impressed. "Funnily enough they said nothing about these issues until after we announced our comprehensive plans. It is time for sports fans up and down the country to show Labour the red card," he said.



Family matters: The Goldsmith clan, Sir James, Annabel carrying Sulaiman and Jemima, on the campaign trail yesterday. Photograph: Brian Harris

Clare Garner

Maybe Sulaiman was trying to say something. First dad. Now granddad. All of a sudden, Sulaiman – who has spent the first five months of his life canvassing *ad nauseam* – was physically sick.

His mother, Jemima Goldsmith, mopped up the mess from her chocolate-coloured velvet sleeves. To her it was baby business as usual, but to the entourage of Referendum Party stage managers, it was an interruption for which they were ill-prepared.

While yesterday's stroll on the edge of Putney Heath may not have been quite what Sulaiman had had in mind when his mother tucked him up in his baby Gap gear, he has little choice.

Jemima explained: "I can't really leave him behind. I haven't got anyone to leave

Family outing to sell granddad's message

him with," no doubt striking a chord with many a single mother. Mother and son were out campaigning with Sir James, who is fighting Putney, and David Mellor on his referendum crusade.

Sulaiman has been on the political beat since "day one." He is, according to Jemima, "remarkably unfazed" about being hauled around the houses. "I think he enjoys it," she said. "I think he gets bored now sitting in a nursery."

The electioneering in Pakistan was certainly good practice for Sulaiman, who even

knew how to handle the men with long lenses. "Can you look to your right, please," yelled a snapper as the family posed for the press. The youngest subject was first to obey his orders.

Jemima continued: "This is a bit public for me. I'd prefer to go on my own, door to door with a pram... actually, it's difficult to talk to people when there are press around."

Whether or not it was down to the presence of the press, Jemima spoke far more passionately about her son than the Referendum Party yesterday. "He goes everywhere with

me," she said, adjusting her veil and his hood simultaneously. "He's attached to me. He's a good boy, really. He's so easy. He's portable."

And when asked whether having Sulaiman on board helped to break the ice on doorsteps, she admitted: "It helps me, I don't know whether it helps other people."

Jemima was determined, however, to appear more than a mere puppet on daddy's string. Challenged on whether she, herself, held strong views on Europe, she replied: "Of course I

do. Why do you think I'm here? It's not just because I am my father's daughter that I'm doing this. I've got more convictions than that."

Unlike some other people she could name: "The biggest crime is the politicians changing their views minutes before the election."

While her canvassing practice in Pakistan seemed to come in handy, Jemima refused to be drawn into making parallels between canvassing with her husband and her father.

"It's a separate campaign," she insisted. A spokeswoman at the campaign office said there was no point in panicking about Jemima's presence in Putney. "We don't see it as a threat," she said.

"She (Jemima) did it for her husband – and it didn't do him much good."



by Anonymous

D minus 7. Nipper was explaining the Mawthney Bonfire to Auntie, about how you take a low grade story (in this case an ancient leak) and use it to bounce your opponent's good news stories off the evening bulletins. To do it successfully, he told her, you needed total shamelessness; a shamelessness that he didn't entirely despise.

Actually Auntie understood it all perfectly well, but she indulged the boy, sensing that he needed to talk. Waiting for the big event of the day to start – and with the moment of decision so close – all of them lived from minute to minute, poll to poll. By this hour, seven days from now, several million voters from Stirling to the Scillies would already have made their decisions.

Out of habit she took yet another look at the gathering pinches. Placing themselves in a fleshy wedge at the side and centre of the hall were the TV higgies; the guys whose reputations within their industries rested upon their performance in these few weeks.

The largest and most influential of them she had dubbed "Uncle Herbert", after her mother's brother. That Herbert – when attending family get-togethers – had cultivated the habit of taking up the whole of a very large sofa, his padded thighs wide apart, jovially rebuking his relatives in very loud voice.

Yesterday this Uncle Herbert had taken up an extra minute of everyone's time by correcting the second page of a party press release, (one that had been written by a harassed Prodigy very late at night).

"I was under the impression," he had said, his voice redolent with ponderous humour, "that 'Achilles' was spelled with a capital 'A', and – the last time I looked – 'heel' had two 'e's'."

"So does 'arsehole'," Big Al had whispered in her ear. And there was the frizzy-haired assistant editor of the major establishment newspaper, a woman used – since earliest childhood – to being told (correctly) how brilliant she was. In press conferences this confidence exhibited itself in publicly pointing out interesting things that she had noticed to her colleagues, and to the politicians.

Auntie turned away from Nipper. A jovial Mr Brown was introducing a list of eminent switchers (some of whom she had actually heard of) who were now enthusiastically endorsing the Candidate.

Then there was the filmed message from the tough diamond entrepreneur, whose

videoclip told the assembly that he liked the Candidate because "he was really up for it, aggressive, longing for it."

He certainly was. When he entered and walked through the middle of the room she realised she was witnessing the transformation of the man that she had known from politician to celebrity; a celebrity who – once the campaign was over – she might over know again.

Once in government qualities other than loyalty and friendship would be needed. This she knew.

Auntie watched him shun the microphone, and stand as close as possible to his audience – speaking fluently without notes about his vision of Britain. She loathed adulation, but he was now a complete star: young, handsome, keeo and honest.

Had Lord Lloyd Webber defected, she could easily imagine specially composed music swelling, and the Candidate advancing down the aisle, pausing, and then breaking into song – his tuneful baritone telling the world of his love of country and his wishes for future generations. At the appropriate point she, Big Al, Nipper, Queen Mum, Blind Lemon Blunkett, Mr Brown and Friend Bobby would all add their voices, until even Uncle Herbert and the piranhas had to join in the chorus. Like that scene out of that movie starring Liza Minelli. If only the voters could see what she saw.

But they couldn't. Fifty minutes later they drove out of London in one of the big battlebuses, its sides covered in cheerful and highly coloured slogans. But as they went no-one waved, no-one cheered, no-one jeered or shouted.

On the posterless streets of mile after mile of sullen suburbs there was nothing but the billboards. Behind these blank doors and windows were the millions who would soon decide whether the Candidate would be able to offer his country anything other than his resignation. What the hell were they thinking?

At seven she was back at HQ to collect her coat and bag before escorting the Candidate to the TV studios for his latest big performance. On her way out she passed by a TV screen showing the familiar bars of an opinion poll graphic. This one gave her party 63%, the Grey Man's lot 27% and the Marine 2% – a lead of 36%! Was she dreaming?

"Take no notice," said a small voice. "It's only Sky's 'just a bit of fun' phone-in poll. It's funny, but we still don't really know what's going on out there."

Had Lord Lloyd Webber defected, she could easily imagine specially composed music swelling

Refusenik loses fight for the right not to vote

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

It is a quintessentially English dispute. In one corner, a determined home counties non-voter who, disillusioned with politics, demands that his name be removed from the electoral register. In the other, the forces of bureaucracy. They refuse doggedly to comply – solely, it appears, because they do not believe they have to.

The issue has given rise to an extraordinary 15-month correspondence between our hero, who wishes to remain anonymous, and the authorities.

This electoral refusenik, who lives in Hampshire, has no wish to evade taxation or to break the law. He merely wishes formally to renounce his right to vote. The nub of his problem is that while it is not unlawful not to

appear on the register, it is unlawful not to fill in the registration form. And filling in the form leads, inexorably, to appearance on the register.

His first foray into the narrow world of local electoral bureaucracy took place in November 1995. He had been on the roll since the 1960s, but now his anger at what he describes as "a bizarre and hubristic search for political leadership... among the floating voters" got the better of him. He asked to be removed from the draft electoral register.

The request brought a swift but predictable response from a junior council official. Householders were required to fill in their details on "Form A", it said. These details could be placed on a register of "other electors", if there was a good case for suppressing them.

As he had already filled in the form, Mr... was not impressed. "With the greatest respect, your letter, seems to miss the point," he replied. "Can we now move on to more profitable ground?"

"I formally abrogate my voting rights and do not wish to be a voter... This does not mean that I do not want to vote but rather that I do not even wish to be associated with the constituency of voters. I am terminating all association with the body politic and refuse to appear as any form of elector."

The reply was curt: "Thank you for your letter... I have retained your name on the Register of Electors as required by Law. Yours Faithfully."

The refusenik tried again: "Dear Sir. Not good enough. I shall take the matter further through the Parliamentary

Ombudsman. Yours Faithfully."

And so he did. In a long, eloquent missive he made his case pungently. "It is only if the elector rejects participation in the circus that Parliamentarians will recognise the extent of their folly," he thundered. But to no avail.

The reply was longer, but no more helpful. The Parliamentary Ombudsman could not help, it said. Try the Local Government Ombudsman.

And so, again, he did. Again, a lengthy reply, this time from an "investigator". Again, no joy. The Local Government Ombudsman, it said, could not help. No injustice had taken place that would justify an investigation.

This time the refusenik took to the telephone.

His call to the district council drew a response from its

solicitor, but still little progress. It was now October 1996. He should wait for the new draft register to appear in November and then object, it suggested. And so, again, he did. On 7 December. Then he waited for a reply. And waited.

Finally, on 14 March, his patience broke. He telephoned the council to complain. Another three weeks went by. The election campaign began. On 9 April, came a response, again from the solicitor. "On looking through the file I have to acknowledge that I have let you down. I have somehow got it into my head that your appeal lay with the County Court... I appreciate this is a matter you again may wish to take up with

the Ombudsman," it said. To add insult to injury, it suggested he wait until the 1997 draft register appeared in November.

The refusenik's reply last weekend was more in sorrow than in anger: "Let me ask you a simple question – it is rhetorical. I do not crave a reply, only silent reflection," he began. "Is the act of not voting a clear and unequivocal proof of the elector's rejection of the election?"

If so, how did the solicitor feel about the fact that between 70 and 80 per cent of voters did not turn out at local elections? Was he apprehensive? Or did he, like the politicians, not really care?

"You have successfully frustrated me," he concluded. "Justice delayed is justice denied."

Ashdown stumped by question of men-only list of new peers

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Paddy Ashdown was stumped yesterday by the contrast between his call for a fair deal for women and his own decision to nominate three men for life peerages in last week's honours list.

Opening an election press conference on the party's policies to help women at work and home, the Liberal Democrat leader said: "There could be no greater symbol of the need to change the male-dominated House of Commons in that in the Commons we have a shoot-

But when *The Independent* asked him why he had chosen not to elevate Emma Nicholson to the House of Lords last week, picking three men instead, Mr Ashdown said: "Because she's an MP."

As Parliament has been dissolved, there are no MPs, and because Emma Nicholson defected to the Liberal Democrats from the Conservative benches, as MP for Devoy West and Torrington, she has been left with no seat to contest in the current election campaign.

Pressed again to explain why he had picked three men for life peerages – Sir David Steel, Sir

were all people who had given long and distinguished service to the party.

The press conference theme was designed to coincide with National Take Our Daughters to Work Day – a scheme to provide young girls with an idea of the world of work.

Diana Maddock, the party spokeswoman on women and family policy, said: "Over 11 million women will go to work today."

"They will be joined at work by thousands of teenage girls observing their mums and dads at work."

"Sadly, too often, they will see

ble hours, low pay and poor maternity rights. These 'glass ceilings' must be shattered."

She said that the party policy for women at home would offer an acceleration of the equitable splitting of pensions on divorce, the introduction of a career's benefit, and improvement in the availability of refuge places for women fleeing from violent partners.

For women at work, the party promised free pre-school places for all three- and four-year-olds, encouragement of more child-care provision by extending tax relief, and an extension of employment and



THE SOUL OF THE PARTY
Photographer David Modell has spent two years on the trail of the Tories. His pictures capture the temper of the Party as it approaches another

TOP
WRITERS
PUT PEN
TO PAPER

WHICH WAY 139 TOP WRITERS
WILL VOTE AND WHY

WHAT'S GOING ON?

BRIAN ENO, SARAH MOSS, BILLY BRAGG, CARMEN CECIL, HURTER DAVIES, ALAN CLARK, JOHN PILGER, JONATHAN COE, NICELLA LAWSON AND 130 OTHERS. AVAILABLE AT WHSMITH.

Middle England swayed by rootless tree

Michael Streeter
finds Redditch
influenced by
Tories' broadcast
attack on Labour

A perceived failure of the Labour Party to set the election campaign alight is influencing some disillusioned Conservatives to vote Tory again, according to *The Independent's* group of voters in a key marginal seat.

Some of the Redditch group – all former Conservative voters – regard John Major as conducting a more effective campaign and there are indications that the recent party election broadcast depicting new Labour as a "rootless tree" has struck a chord.

Promisingly for Tony Blair, his party's pledge to raise £1bn for the health services from the midweek lottery has been favourably received. But more ominously for him, there are signs that the state of the economy, and its prospects under a change of government, are playing more and more in the minds of so-called *Mondeo Man* across middle England.

The common ground between local Tory and Labour campaigners that the result in the Hereford and Worcester seat – where Labour needs a swing of just over 3 per cent to win – may be closer than indicated by national polls is also born out by the group's views. Among the undecided there is admiration for the Liberal Democrat policies, but a stronger slide towards staying with the Tories rather than trusting the uncertainty of a Labour government.

Steven Marriott, 28, had wanted to vote Labour for the first time but will now support the Tories. "The campaign has disappointed me, it's like they say a Punch and Judy show. I thought the parties were going to sell themselves but they're just hickering. I expected Tony Blair would have something to say." He is concerned about tax rises but has seen nothing from new Labour to inspire him.

Roger Jones, 42, an invoice manager, remains undecided but was swayed by the rootless tree broadcast. "I thought that was a vote getter and for me a real eye opener. It brought home that Labour change their policies all the time." He is waiting to see if Mr Blair can produce new policy initiative.

Another group member, Ed-



Fuel stop: A man concentrating on his food yesterday in the key marginal seat of Redditch

Photograph: Brian Harris

an Nicholls, 60, a hatcher, has been more confused than enlightened so far. "The campaign has been very negative and more about one-upmanship." He had considered voting Labour but believes he will stick with "what I know" on the issues that matter most, trust and the economy, again citing the rootless tree broadcast.

The economy also concerned Lionel Baird, 52, a paramedic who had been determined to vote for Mr Blair but has switched back to Mr Major. "I'm looking to retire in five or six years and I'm really starting to think about what will happen to my investments. It all depends on growth and will that slow down under Labour? I'm worried they might think they won't get in again and so try to do too much too quickly and muck it up."

However, toolmaker Andrew

Osciak, 45, who had wobbled over his new-found support for Labour, is now concerned about the Tory divisions over Europe. "They are split while Labour seem stronger and united."

He remains unconvinced by the campaign but has a different view of the economy from other group members. "John Major talks about a boom but there is no boom in Redditch. They say unemployment is falling but in Redditch there are more and more people in part-time jobs, they're constantly on the move yet they are classed as fully employed. I've been made redundant three times in the last few years. I don't agree that we can't do any better."

Susan Lovett, 38, a former sales consultant, was impressed by Labour's new lottery policy though she will still vote Tory. "It's a very clever move. A lot of

people including myself have always thought that the money should go to education or health rather than to the Churchill papers or the Royal Opera House."

Increasingly, her concern is for

**Major talks
about a boom, but
there is no boom
in Redditch**

the economy, on which she simply does not trust Labour.

David Bignell, 51, a retired British Telecom engineer, is also impressed with the lottery scheme. "It's appealing though it's not really the responsibility of the lottery to do these

things. It should be the government." Locally he feels the Tories have offered nothing and is worried about the state of hospitals as well as the economy. But ultimately he will vote Tory again. "I do think it's about the right man for the job."

Cold-store operator Alan Tomes, 35, agrees. "I suppose it's just a gut feeling. I started to think more about the election and I believe that John Major is still the right man for the job. I trust him to make the right decision for the country, for example over the single currency."

Like many in the group he wants trade with the rest of Europe but is wary about more integration. Yet their general view concurred with the findings of Labour canvassers in Redditch that Europe interests voters, but is too confusing to be a determining factor.

With one week of the campaign to go Mark Redfearn, 29, an engineer, feels more unsure than ever about who to support and will probably sit down this weekend to decide. One of the narrow majority in the group of 13 who had initially decided to switch to Labour – only two are now "definite", suggesting a modest Labour win in Redditch – Mr Redfearn is unhappy with the party's "negative" campaign. "I saw the broadcast where they played 'Land of Hope and Glory' and it was rubbish. All they did was talk about the bad things not what they are going to do."

"I had made up my mind that I would never vote Conservative again and that I would vote Labour. But now I'm not so sure. Tony Blair has let me down a bit, cannot face issues and he skids around them. I'm 50-50 at the moment."

Lang in row over Scottish job fears

Stephen Goodwin

Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, was accused of "juvenile scaremongering" yesterday after he contradicted the boss of Scotland's second largest insurance company on the firm's attitude to devolution.

The Conservatives are rattled by an apparent change of heart by both Scottish Widows and Standard Life, from coded warnings of job losses north of the border at the time of the 1992 election to one of business as usual under home rule.

Mike Ross, the chief executive of Scottish Widows which manages funds worth £24bn, has at least twice this year expressed a relaxed attitude to a Scottish parliament.

In March he said in a radio broadcast: "I don't see any particular threats in the winds, for example, from devolution." And on Wednesday the *Scotsman* newspaper reported Mr Ross as being "happy" with what he knew of Labour's proposals.

But Mr Lang insisted Scottish Widows were "against" devolution. A senior executive at the insurance company, who he repeatedly refused to identify, had told him the company "did not feel comfortable with the proposition."

"I have spoken to a senior executive at the Scottish Widows Fund and it is quite clear that the fund is extremely unhappy about the prospect of constitutional change and the other proposals of the Labour Party," Mr Lang said.

In a deftly-worded response, Mr Ross reiterated Scottish Widows' neutral stance. The company's overriding concern was to protect the interests of policy holders and it was "vital" that under any constitutional

arrangements there should be fiscal and regulatory cohesion across the UK for insurance, he said.

In common with any other business, Scottish Widows preferred to have as few changes to contend with as possible, but Mr Ross concluded: "On the issue of devolution, we neither back it nor oppose it."

In 1992 Standard Life, Scotland's largest insurance company managing funds of totalling some £50bn, and Scottish Widows were accused of trying to influence employees' after indicating that some operations might be moved to England if there was home rule.

George Robertson, the shadow Scottish secretary, said Mr Lang should "put up or shut up. If he cannot name his sources he should not indulge in this rather juvenile scaremongering."

It was clear that the move companies learnt about Labour's devolution proposals the more comfortable they were with them, Mr Robertson said. "If one compares what Standard Life and Scottish Widows were saying at the last election on the record to what they are saying now, it is nothing less than a sea change in opinion."

Widening the charge to industry in general, Mr Lang said Labour's policies would destroy Scotland's reputation as an investment centre. In 1995-96 Scotland had attracted a record £1bn worth of investment and over 1,000 jobs a month had been created or safeguarded. "Within weeks" of a Labour victory, this flow would dry up, he said. But when pressed to name a single company that had told him it would leave Scotland or not invest if Labour devolved power to Edinburgh, he was unable or unwilling to do so.

to vote

Everywhere. Now.

NOKIA 9000

It's everything you need to keep in touch. Phone, fax, e-mail, the Internet. Put it in your pocket and take it everywhere.

The Nokia 9000 Communicator appearing in *The Saint* film. At cinemas everywhere now.

Pick up a Saint leaflet at participating retailers and play *The Saint* Internet game with Nokia to get a chance to win £100,000 worth of prizes.

At selected outlets of Dixons, Dixons Tax Free, Peoples Phone, Talkland, The Carphone Warehouse or The Link stores.

NOKIA
CONNECTING PEOPLE

Survey undertaken by NOP Market Research among 1,000 randomly selected bank customers. Interviews were conducted by telephone between 20 Nov 1996 and 12 Dec 1996. Excludes must be aged 18 or over in order to safeguard our customers. Certain transactions may require written confirmation. First Direct reserves the right to decline to open an account for you. First Direct credit facilities are subject to status. For written details of our services write to First Direct, Freeport, Leeds LS98 2RF. First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc. Calls may be monitored and/or recorded. LLOYDS Cheque Account details are based on the Classic Account. The costs comprise fees of £3 per month. BARCLAYS Cheque Account details are based on the Barclays Bank Account. The costs comprise fees of £3 per month. NAT WEST Cheque Account details are based on the Current Plus Account. The costs comprise fees of £3 per month. All fees may vary in the future. First Direct variable interest rate for overdrafts up to £250 is 12.5% EAR. All information based on authorised overdrafts of 5 days or more per month and correct at 11 March 1997. Member HSBC

first direct

Free from charges

Banking with First Direct is free because we do not charge Cheque Account customers for everyday banking transactions, even if you're overdrawn. And all our customers automatically receive an overdraft up to £250 – also free of any fees. So compared to other high street bank accounts you're better off with First Direct from day one. We're a member of the HSBC Group which is one of the largest banking and financial services organisations in the world, and in the course of a year you'll find we offer more cost effective current account banking. And the service we provide means you benefit in many other ways too.

By telephone, 24 hours a day

We provide the ultimate in convenience. You can bank with us at any time, 365 days (and nights) of the year, from wherever there's a telephone, in your home, office or car. And all UK calls are charged at local rates.

Personal and professional service

Every call is answered by our Banking Representatives. They have all they need at their fingertips to deal with your day-to-day banking needs. And when you require more specialised assistance, such as a loan, they can instantly refer you to someone who can help.

Getting cash is easy

Every Cheque Account customer receives the First Direct Card. This allows you to withdraw up to £500 a day from over 11,500 cash machines around the UK, including those of Midland. It also guarantees cheques for £100 and includes the Switch payment facility.

So is paying bills

Our service includes a free bill payment service. Simply call, tell us who to pay, how much and when, and we do it. This means you can arrange to pay your bills at the most convenient time without the need to keep having to remember to organise it.

A full banking service with more benefits

As well as our Cheque Account we offer saving, borrowing, travel and insurance services cost effectively by telephone. Take saving; our rates are always competitive, we offer transfers to and from your Cheque Account. So your money is always working hard without the need for you to do the same.

We work hard to maintain the service

The best people to demonstrate the quality of a banking service are its customers – 87% of ours have recommended us to their friends and colleagues in the last 12 months.

Opening an account is easy too

We also appreciate how daunting changing bank accounts can be. So we make it easy. Easy to open a First Direct account, then easy to arrange for your salary to be paid in and easy for all your standing orders and direct debits to be transferred to your account. And it's easy (and free) to find out more right now. Call us on 0800 24 24 24 or complete the coupon.

Why pay to bank when First Direct is free?

Account Type	Annual Current Account Charges (based on fees for use of £250 overdraft)
Lloyds Classic	£96
NatWest Current Plus	£60
Barclays Bank Account	£60
First Direct	£0

Annual current account charges
(based on fees for use of £250 overdraft)

If you're paying more are you with the right bank?

0800 24 24 24

Call free or complete the coupon and post to:
First Direct, FREEPOST, Leeds LS98 2RF

Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms or Title _____
Surname _____
Forename(s) _____
UK Address _____
Postcode _____
Telephone No _____

international

French left goes in search of a new ideology

Like Blair's Labour, the Socialists have moved right, writes John Lichtfield

Paris — It is nearly half a century since Britain and France drove together, politically speaking, on the left side of the road. The last time Paris and London both had Socialist leaders was in 1951 (President Vincent Auriol and Prime Minister Clement Attlee).

Over the next five weeks, it is just possible that left-leaning governments will be elected at both ends of the Channel tunnel. (Near simultaneous, neighbouring elections are also unusual: 1974 was the last time it happened.)

The coincidence of polls

may be of no consequence in Tony Blair: but it is proving an embarrassment in the French Socialist leader, Lionel Jospin. Mr Jospin, 59, has been suffering unhelpful, and often unfair, comparisons with Mr Blair for months. They have become thick and fast since the snap French parliamentary election was announced by President Jacques Chirac on Monday.

"It seems to me that the British Labour party has had its cultural revolution, but not the French Socialists," said the former centre-right prime minister, Edouard Balladur. "Mr Jospin is still talking, and thinking, in the outdated concepts of state intervention which failed in the early 1980s."

There is some truth in this. Mr Jospin, after a good performance and honourable defeat in the 1995 presidential election, has failed to give the French Socialists a new post-Mitterrand mission or gloss. But British-French comparisons are also misleading.

Mr Blair's task was to bury the image of a statist, welfareist Labour Party, controlled by unions and special interests. Mr Jospin's problem is, in a sense, the opposite.

They had already become centrist, not by design but by drift.

Mr Jospin and his colleagues criticise the failings of the state-shrinking reforms undertaken

attempted half-heartedly under Socialist governments in the 1980s.

Should the Socialists turn left again, as the radical wing of the party demands? Or try to

claim the centre, by painting the Juppé government as skidding to the right? So far, Mr Jospin has tried to do both.

presenting himself as the kinder, gentler alternative to a painful set of reforms which he does not dare wholly to rep-

It seems to me that the Labour Party has had its cultural revolution, but not the French socialists

The French Socialists emerged from the scandals and U-turns of the Mitterrand years with no visible ideology at all.

since President Chirac and Prime Minister Alain Juppé came to power two years ago. But similar projects had been

presenting himself as the kinder, gentler alternative to a painful set of reforms which he does not dare wholly to rep-

Common cause: Left-winger Lionel Jospin, centre, who could soon be leading France with Tony Blair in power in Britain. The last time Paris and London both had left-leaning leaders was in 1951 with French President Vincent Auriol, far left, and Labour Prime Minister Clement Attlee, left.



Dixons

SAVE UP TO £100 ON BRITAIN'S BIGGEST RANGE OF CAMERAS

PLUS INTEREST FREE OPTION* ON EVERYTHING OVER £100 WITH MASTERCARD Coverplan

SAMSUNG 1050
38-105mm ZOOM CAMERA
● Autoflash with 'red-eye' reduction.
● Continuous shooting mode.
● Autofocus.
● Macro facility.
Was £179.99, £169.99, £149.99.

PRICE CRASH
£129.99

SAVE £50

Canon A7
35mm AUTOFOCUS CAMERA
OUTFIT
● Big viewfinder ● Auto bracketing
● Self-timer ● Complete with 2 Kodak film, 2 photo album, case and batteries.
Was £229.99.

PRICE CRASH
£59.99

FUJI FORNEX 200
ADVANCED PHOTO SYSTEM ZOOM CAMERA
● 30-60mm zoom lens ● Auto bracketing ● Macro facility ● Complete with 2 Kodak film, 2 photo album, case and batteries.
Was £229.99.

PRICE CRASH
£169.99

New Technology

The latest camera technology that's small enough for everyone to use. With drop-in film for easy loading, no more fiddly negatives and a choice of different picture formats to bring out the creative genius in you. Advanced Photo System cameras will change the way you take photographs for ever - and they're small enough to slip into your pocket!

ADVANCED PHOTO SYSTEM ZOOM CAMERA. ● 24-48mm zoom lens. ● Ultra compact. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

£259.99

Dixons

PRICE CRASH

SAVE UP TO £100

OLYMPUS TRIP 301
35mm CAMERA
● Built-in 'red-eye' reducing flash.
● Motor wind/rewind.
● Self-timer.
Was £49.99.

SAVE £10

PRICE CRASH
£39.99

MINOLTA VECTIS 20
ADVANCED PHOTO SYSTEM ZOOM CAMERA
● 30-60mm zoom lens.
● Information exchange.
● Date/time backprinting.
● Autoflash.
Was £169.99.

PRICE CRASH
£129.99

SAVE £40

Nikon F50
AUTOFOCUS SLR CAMERA
● Nikon 35-60mm zoom lens.
● Programmed auto-exposure modes.
● Autofocus with manual override.
● 3D matrix metering.
Was £399.99. In-store Price £349.99.

SAVE £100 WITH THIS VOUCHER

£299.99

New Technology

It had to happen... cameras have gone digital. At Dixons, we were converted in a flash. Take the Sony DSC-F1. It records your picture digitally - up to 106 shots at a time. You can view them on the LCD screen instantly, edit them on your PC, then incorporate them into reports and projects. You can even have prints, just like the good old days! With a rotating and macro close-up lens, the DSC-F1 puts the latest photo technology in anyone's pocket.

SONY DSC-F1 DIGITAL CAMERA. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

£699.99

Dixons

Dixons

There's a great deal going on

Tel: 0181-200 0200 FOR YOUR NEAREST BRANCH

Le Pen leaves door open to election role

John Lichtfield

There was a notable absentee from the impressively long list of National Front candidates for the French election presented by Jean-Marie Le Pen yesterday. The absentee was Le Cheif, or Le Bête (the beast) as he likes to call himself, Jean-Marie Le Pen himself.

The leader of the far-right FN said that he might still run in the snap parliamentary election called for 25 May and 1 June. He would make the announcement when "the time was right".

Le Pen boasted that, if requested to do so, the "quasi-totality" of the FN candidates would be "delighted" to stand down and surrender their constituencies for him. The "quasi-totality", please note, not the totality.

There are two reasons for Mr Le Pen's uncharacteristic shyness. First, he knows that the other parties will mobilise all their heaviest weaponry against him as soon as they know where he is standing.

Second, Mr Le Pen is reluctant to stand at all. His closest advisers have warned him that it would be seriously damaging if he ran and lost, while his *de facto* Number Two, the rising power in the FN, Bruno Mégret, ran and won.

Mr Mégret, as expected, will be the FN candidate in Vitrolles-Marguane, the constituency north of Marseille which included the town where his wife, Catherine, won a pivotal mayoral election in February. This seat, nurtured by Mr Mégret for years, is the one near-certain FN gain in next month's election. Mr Mégret, it can be assumed, is the one FN candidate who would not be delighted to give up his seat to his boss.

A simultaneous Mégret victory and a Le Pen defeat in the parliamentary election would be a desperate blow to the *amour propre* of Le Bête. It would also

consolidate Mr Mégret's claim to be the future leader of the party - the man capable of making the FN respectable to wavering voters who dislike the vulgarity and intermittently overt extremism of Le Pen.

The FN leader's difficulties point to the continuing electoral and strategic weaknesses of Le Penism, despite the victory in Vitrolles and its colonisation of a large part of the French working class.

The Front is running at about 13 to 15 per cent in opinion polls: this would be a historical



Le Pen: Reluctant to stand in case he loses

high for the FN in a parliamentary election.

It would be enough to put over 100 (Mr Le Pen predicts 200) FN candidates into the second round of voting on 1 June. It would bring about scores of awkward three-way second round contests, which might prevent the centre-right parties now in government from achieving another majority.

But, unless the polls are substantially undercounting FN support, as they sometimes do, it would not give Le Pen more than a couple of seats. Le Cheif said yesterday that his target was 10 seats. Political analysts say he will be lucky to gain more than one: Mr Mégret's in Vitrolles.

New shows

Swelcom
lion migt

SDN?

الاحد من الاحد

New deal for disabled as statue shows Roosevelt in wheelchair

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

A bitter controversy involving the longest serving president of the United States, disabled lobby groups and a windswept site on the banks of the Potomac River, appears close to resolution following the last-minute intervention of President Bill Clinton.

A week before the official opening of Washington's first memorial to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Mr Clinton has said that, if necessary, he will legislate to have an additional statue of the former president incorporated into the rambling granite ensemble.

The extra statue is to depict FDR in the wheelchair he steadfastly avoided using for his public appearances lest it damage his chances of elected office.

Roosevelt was stricken by polio in 1921 when he was 39, and - in the delicate words of the chronology that is inscribed in steps in the memorial complex - "never again walked unaided".

An official memorial to FDR, author of the New Deal and the president who brought the US into the Second World War, was a difficult project from the start, not least because Roosevelt himself had expressly said he did not want one. All he would agree to was a small plaque positioned in front of the National Archives.

The late president's objections, though, were by no means the only difficulty, as is evident from the 50 years the project has been in gestation. There were barely disguised funding problems, the question of a suitable site, and the distinctly mixed political assessment of Roosevelt's legacy in the decades after his death.

The years of the cold war and then of Reaganism seemed to negate much of what FDR had stood for in foreign and domestic policy; the political climate was hardly conducive to celebrating his memory.

With Bill Clinton, a Democrat, into his second term as president, and New Dealism enjoying a measure of rehabilitation, all seemed set fair for the memorial finally to be completed and opened.

Almost 40 years after the site was chosen and six years after the ground was broken, the four vast outdoor chambers, representing FDR's four terms as president, were almost ready.

The giant waterfalls were functioning; the sculptures and bas-reliefs depicting FDR, his formidable wife, Eleanor, and episodes from his life, were in position. The mud was finally yielding to turlud paving.

At the memorial's opening ceremony, however, it emerged that none of the



Always sitting: President Roosevelt flanked by Churchill (left) and Stalin at Yalta. Bill Clinton (below right) has ensured FDR will be shown in a wheelchair

representations of Roosevelt would show his handicap.

For those who know, the signs are there. FDR is never shown standing up. The dominant statue shows him sitting in the dining chair he sat in to receive guests - if you look carefully, to the right and behind the statue, you can see that the chair has small castors.

But, at a time and in a place where groups representing the rights of disabled people, as of other minority groups, wield great public influence, the omission was denounced. The campaign spread

from disabled groups who said they felt slighted by the omission to others who regarded it simply as a travesty of the historical truth, the perpetuation of a lie. There were calls for a big demonstration by disabled people at the opening ceremony next week unless there was an undertaking to add a statue of wheelchair-bound FDR.

Members of the memorial commission defended the lack of such a statue by noting the lack of pictures of Roosevelt in his wheelchair or being helped to walk. They, too, cited historical accuracy in

their favour and FDR's elaborate efforts not to appear handicapped. And they talked of the "artistic integrity" of the memorial complex.

Last year, however, commission members agreed to include a replica of one of FDR's wheelchairs in the reception building. Now, by promising special legislation to be placed before Congress - a Congress that voted 90 per cent of the \$48m (£30m) cost of the memorial from public funds and is highly sensitive to public opinion - Mr Clinton has probably forced their hand.



significant shorts

Russia and China cut their frontier forces

President Boris Yeltsin and his Chinese counterpart, Jiang Zemin, were joined by leaders of the Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan for the signing of a treaty cutting forces along the former Sino-Soviet border, which saw Soviet-Chinese clashes in 1969. Details of the pact were secret but Russian sources said land forces, short-range aviation and anti-aircraft defences would be limited in a 63-mile-wide strip along the border. On the home front, Mr Yeltsin appointed the rising young First Deputy Prime Minister, Boris Nemtsov, as Fuel and Energy Minister. **Helen Womack - Moscow**

Move to halt sex-slave trade

EU ministers gathered before their two-day conference to work out a unified front to combat trafficking of women. The conference brought together justice and interior ministers to spotlight a racket that brings thousands of women into Western Europe. Many, promised legitimate jobs, end in prostitution. **AP - The Hague**

Woman dies in bungled ambush

A Palestinian woman was killed and five relatives wounded in a bungled ambush by off-duty Palestinian security officers. The victims' car was mistaken for a vehicle they were targeting as part of a personal vendetta. Survivors identified their assailants. **AP - Ramallah**

Plaudits for Fujimori

Japan's Foreign Minister, Yukihiko Ikeda, arrived in Lima to congratulate President Alberto Fujimori and hear how Peru's military ended the 18-week hostage crisis. In Tokyo, the Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, said he planned to visit Peru to add his thanks. **Reuters - Lima**

Algerian rebels butcher 42

Muslim rebels hacked to death 42 people in a village, the second massacre in Algeria in 24 hours. Victims included 17 women and three babies. **Reuters - Paris**

Turin Shroud to go on show

The Shroud of Turin, venerated as Christ's burial cloth, which was rescued from a blazing chapel, will go on display as planned next year. It remains at a secret location as the cause of the 11 April blaze is investigated. **AP - Rome**

Dutch police take the Mickey

Amsterdam is sending its police chief, Jelle Kuiper, to Disneyland Paris to try to improve the force's relations with the public. He will visit the park to see how staff are taught the art of customer service. **Reuters - Amsterdam**

Japan transplant go-ahead

Japan's parliament passed a bill recognising an end of brain functions as legal death, clearing the way for organ transplants for the first time since a 1968 heart transplant sparked criminal investigations. **Reuters - Tokyo**

Correction

In Mary Dejevsky's report on the US ratification of the chemical-weapons convention in Tuesday's *Independent*, we incorrectly reported that Iran had refused to sign the convention. Iran has in fact signed.

US welcomes a million migrants

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

Immigration figures released this week show that nearly 1 million foreigners were allowed to settle in the United States last year, an increase of nearly 30 per cent on the previous year.

The figures, which end a run of four years in which legal immigration has declined, have added to a growing debate in which two national currents of thought collide: the one stressing the benefits, the other the costs, of new residents.

The Immigration and Naturalisation Service, which processes applications but does not set policy - cites a number of special circumstances for last year's increase in legal immigration. A spokesman said that it reflected in part the number of permits that were carried over into 1996 after not being used in 1995.

A larger factor, he said, was the knock-on effect of a 1986 amnesty of illegal immigrants; the new citizens are entitled to bring in their families. There is no ceiling on these numbers, the agency stresses; the US Congress sets the qual-

ifications and those who meet them are allowed in.

The Cato Institute, which is well-disposed to immigration, agreed the figures represented a temporary blip and that immigration was set to continue its decline. "Immigrants are not just mouths to feed. They are productive hands and fertile minds," a spokesman said.

But the head of a group hostile to immigration, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, claimed the figures showed the whole system was out of control.

"What we need is an immigration time-out," said Dan Stein, Lamar Smith, chairman of the House of Representatives subcommittee on immigration, focused his argument on the nature of those being admitted, objecting that 2 million of the new immigrants over the next five years would have no secondary education and no skills.

Although this debate is still tranquil by European standards, the states and cities most affected by the increases are calling for policy to be tightened and at least one, Florida, is taking the federal government to court.

Bomber sought 'rivers of blood'

Tim Cornwell
Denver

Accused Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh set out to see "rivers of blood flow in the streets of America", jurors in his murder trial were told yesterday. He planted a massive truck bomb outside a US government building in the hope of inspiring an armed revolt.

Months before the bombing he had selected the target, prosecutor Joseph Hartzler said, outlining a powerful government case against the man accused of the worst act of terrorism on US soil. He stole detonators from a rock quarry and used Campbell's soup tins to model the barrels of home-made explosives he would use.

The former Gulf War soldier went on trial for his life yesterday in a Denver courtroom, one day after his 29th birthday. Mr McVeigh turned to terror to settle his grievances against a government he hated, Mr Hartzler said, that "with premeditated intent and a well-designed plan, he chose to take innocent lives to serve his twisted purpose."

Three weeks before the bombing Mr McVeigh warned

his sister to stop writing him letters because the "G men", Federal agents, might get them. Arrested on the morning of the blast driving out of Oklahoma City, he had the earplugs in his pocket that he used to protect his eardrums.

Mr Hartzler recalled the children who died in a day-care centre on the second floor of the Alfred Murrah building.

He described a mother who had just dropped off her 16-month-old child, turning to see his hands pressed against the window - the last time she would see her child alive.

The government's case is that Mr McVeigh rented a yellow Ryder truck, packed it with explosives made with fertiliser and fuel oils, drove it to Oklahoma City, and detonated it at 9.02am on 19 April 1995.

He was wearing a T-shirt with a photograph of Abraham Lincoln. Mr Hartzler said: "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants," it said on the back.

In a pocket was a business card from a military supply company, with the handwritten note: "TNT at \$5 a stick".

No-one brings home the advantages of a hardwood floor like the Scandinavian Flooring Company



If you want to bring out the natural beauty of your rooms you want a hardwood floor from the Scandinavian Flooring Company. With their unique three-layered design to prevent expansion and contraction. And with our specialist experience we are laying quality wooden floors with no fuss, no mess in a day. See for yourself.

- Suitable for laying to most sub-floors including concrete
- Choice of hardwoods and range of designs
- Pre-finished for quick installation
- Full five year guarantee
- Lacquered, sealed easy-clean finish
- 12 months interest free loan
- Installed by our own craftsmen anywhere in mainland UK

Free no obligation survey
Free colour brochure

Name: _____
Tel No: _____
Address: _____
Postcode: _____

FREEPHONE 0800 616 748
(24 hrs)
Scandinavian Flooring Company
FREEPOST OF2361, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 6BP

Downloading from the Internet without ISDN?
Here's something to pass the time.



Fig. 11. The water-lily fold for table napkins.

ISDN is up to four times quicker than an ordinary phone line. Call BT Business Connections on Freephone 0800 800 800.

Freefone 0800 800 800 BT

This little ad could make a big difference to your mortgage.

- It's easy to transfer.
- Our mortgage rate is 6.31% (6.5% APR variable).
- Call us now for more details.



0181 649 9099 0161 831 9099 0141 221 9099
LONDON MANCHESTER GLASGOW
CALL ANYTIME 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm Saturday. Please quote ref. IND106
A Royal Bank of Scotland company.

Subject to credit. Life insurance to cover the loan and security required. Please contact us. WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY LOSS OF YOUR HOME OR OTHER ASSETS. IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT, Calls may be recorded for your added security. Direct Line and the red phone are trademarks of Direct Line Insurance plc, used with its permission.

16
international

Global strategy: Experts warn of new weapons and policies

Power-nations look away as crises loom

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent

A pervasive and persistent parochialism has dogged the foreign and security policies of the main players on the world stage over the past year, according to the authoritative London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies.

A brief post-Cold War sense of humanitarian obligation to try to solve the world's problems has begun to give way to colder *realpolitik* calculations of what can be done. In future, "coalitions of the ready and willing" will only be made up of the relevant and affected.

In its annual *Strategic Survey*, published yesterday, the Institute noted, with concern, that national elections in France, Israel, Japan, Russia, Taiwan and the US all interfered with clear foreign policy choices during 1996. In 1997, the same thing happened in Britain.

In their search for votes, or for support, leaders vying for the top position adjusted their policies to reflect what they thought their constituents wanted. Almost inevitably, this did not include foreign issues.

Institute Director John Chipman, launching this year's Sur-

vey, said that in spite of efforts to organise common foreign and security policies, western countries are reverting to a position where they will act only when they see a clear interest that can be explained domestically.

For western countries the absence of an obvious external

“The events of 1996 showed that no state... is immune from foreign meddling”

threat reinforces their introverted tendencies.

While US provincialism has a long tradition, the survey says, European parochialism took on a new mantle in 1996. The Institute concludes that “while the ‘under construction’ signs were up, the Europeans barely lifted their gaze above their own ramparts.”

With Europe dragging its feet the onus was, as ever, on the US to lead in world affairs.

But the US, again, saw everything through domestic lenses, delaying the admission there would be a follow-on force in Bosnia and attacking soft targets close to home like companies which tried to do business with Cuba.

Russia, too, saw things through domestic eyes — particularly the key issue of Nato enlargement which was used much as Britain's political parties used that of Europe, as a tool for domestic political confrontation.

“The events of 1996 overwhelmingly showed,” the institute concludes, “that no state, including the US, was immune from foreign meddling in domestic affairs or domestic meddling in foreign affairs. The distinction between foreign and domestic is becoming thin and the net result is more incoherence.”

In Russia, the institute notes a decline in industrial production, a deteriorating military, and a profound criminalisation of politics and economics. Yet the institute is surprisingly optimistic. “This is not a time of troubles in the classic sense... there is no tyrant waiting in the wings, nor could one impose himself on a population that is

now half-free.”

Dr Chipman said China was an “assertive” power, rather than a directly threatening one. “China veers from excessive confidence to paranoia about its ability to prosper free of foreign constraint. The debate about how to handle China has become one of the central issues in international relations.”

The survey identifies an “art of conflict and crisis” in Africa, illustrated as running from the Red Sea through southeast Sudan, across the whole of Rwanda and Burundi and most of Zaire, and embracing the northern part of Angola.

The survey says the international community is gradually, but significantly, disengaging from Africa.

“The test of whether the West can maintain its indifference will come if Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko is deposed and the country collapses. Should the West allow it to descend into chaos without attempting to shore up a reasonable, unifying government, there will be little hope for any other African country facing an uncertain future.”

■ *Strategic Survey 1996/97*, (Oxford University Press for the IIS, London, 1997), £25/\$39.



A young Rwandan refugee watches over his mother, who has cholera, in Kisangani

Photograph: Reuters

Rebels close on Kinshasa

Mary Braid
Johannesburg

The siege of Kinshasa drew closer yesterday after rebels announced the capture of three gateway towns to the Zairean capital, choking food and essential supplies. Mwenge Kongolo, the rebel “justice minister,” revised the recent forecast by his leader, Laurent Kabila, of the fall of Kinshasa from weeks to “a matter of days.”

The rebels seized Ilebo, Bihaka and Dowe. A pincer offensive appears to be under way after missionaries in Bas-Zaïre province reported the arrival of the first rebel force west of Kinshasa. Families of government soldiers in the port of Matadi are being sent back to Kinshasa and diplomats in the capital confirm military activity on the border between Bas-Zaïre and Angola.

Analysts had forecast that Angola could provide a strategic springboard for the rebels. President Sese Seko Mobutu is an old enemy of the Angolan President, Jose Eduardo dos Santos. “The rebel plan is becoming clearer now,” said an analyst in Kinshasa. “They want to force the capital into submission and the noose is tightening.”

Most people in Kinshasa will welcome the speed of the rebel

advance but there are concerns that Mr Mobutu, the country's corrupt ruler for the past three decades, may take violent revenge before his almost inevitable flight. If he spurs his people, and opposition politicians, his desperate, thuggish soldiers, who have looted and raped civilians during six months of retreat, may not.

The official line is that troops will defend Kinshasa to the last man. But yesterday Mr Kongolo said he did not believe there would be a bloody battle for the capital. In Geneva, Francois Lumumba, son of Patrice Lumumba, the country's first prime minister, and Mr Kabila's hero, appealed to Mr Mobutu not to launch any revenge attacks on the population.

“To the numerous crimes (he has) already committed it is useless to add, on the eve of the new regime, a crime against humanity,” said Mr Lumumba, an opposition figure in Kinshasa who was on his way to eastern Zaire for talks with Mr Kabila.

Mr Mobutu was implicated in the death of Patrice Lumumba. The people of Kinshasa may have to rely on Mr Mobutu's restraint, because South African-led peace talks are going nowhere. Although South African ministers said yesterday that the UN special envoy, Mo-

hamed Sahnoun, was poised to return to Cape Town to settle a date and venue for direct talks and that both sides had reaffirmed their commitment to a negotiated peace, analysts believe Mr Mobutu will not stop until Mr Mobutu and his regime are ousted.

The US has warned that Mr Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire could be damaging relations with the West by failing to repatriate Rwandan Hutu refugees in east Zaire. Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, had claimed the rebels

were starving refugees by blocking aid agencies access to them. The refugees fled to Zaire two years ago after the Hutu genocide of 800,000 Tutsis.

The rebels deny being destructive. Yesterday they allowed the UN to visit camps where rebel massacres of refugees and deaths from starvation had been reported. Last night a UN spokesman said a team had found two camps, which until this week housed 55,000 refugees, deserted, at Kasese, south of Kisangani. The rebels, he said, would not allow the team to travel further.

BRITAIN SWINGS TO THE LEFT



There's a massive swing to Alliance & Leicester happening. For the nation's savers the reasons are clear.

If you have a branch-based notice account with the Halifax then you should consider making the switch to Alliance & Leicester today. Our new Platinum Plus notice account offers higher interest rates on balances of £2,500 or more.*

So if you are with the Halifax, follow the trend and open a Platinum Plus account today. For details of your nearest Alliance & Leicester branch, call 0800 412 214.

**ALLIANCE
LEICESTER**

Terms and conditions: *Source: Bank's Guide. Comparison correct as at 21 April 1997, and is limited to rates available on that date alone. Comparison is on the basis of the best withdrawal terms and conditions on offer from accounts to account, and includes any bonuses, and are for the best paying branch-based UK high street notice accounts from the providers referred to. Interest rates shown are for balances of £100,000. Interest rates quoted are variable and gross. For the Platinum Plus account withdrawal rates are allowed after 90 days' notice, or immediately subject to 90 days' loss of interest on the day of withdrawal. Minimum opening balance £2,500. Interest paid annually or monthly on request. Different interest rates apply to monthly interest. The interest rate bonus of 0.20% gross p.a. will be payable on the day following receipt, up to and including the day before withdrawal, except for cheques where it is calculated from the fourth banking day following receipt. Interest is calculated daily from the day following receipt, up to and including the day before withdrawal, except for cheques where it is calculated from the fourth banking day following receipt. Customers, Saturday and Bank Holiday are not banking days. Maximum investment with Alliance & Leicester is £100,000 per individual. Full terms and conditions available on request. Alliance & Leicester plc, Registered Office: 40 Park Lane, London, W1Y 6EQ. Company No. 3263171. Registered in England. Authorized as a bank pursuant to the Banking Act 1987. Member of the British Bankers Association.



Fast vehicle rescue
at just 8p per day.

When your car lets you down,
Green Flag won't. On average, we rescue
our members in just 35 minutes.*
And if we're not with you in less than
one hour, you can claim £10 back.

Call FREE today on
0800 001 353

Green Flag
Motoring Assistance

WE LEAVE EVERYONE STANDING BUT YOU.
*Based upon recovery cover only
*Verified from customer satisfaction questionnaires

مكتبة من الأصيل

Anzacs declare war on the Dirty Digger

Robert Milliken
Sydney

As Australians mark Anzac Day, Rupert Murdoch is under fire for his commercial exploitation of one of the most sacred days in the Australian calendar, when the country commemorates its war dead.

Veterans and their families have accused Mr Murdoch of "corporate vandalism" over his use of military symbols to promote an Anzac Test between Australian and New Zealand rugby league teams in Sydney today. The game will be staged by Superleague, the rugby league enterprise that Mr Murdoch has created for his Australian pay-television venture.

Anzac Day is a public holiday in which Australians and New Zealanders mark the anniversary of the disastrous Gallipoli landings of the First World War on 25 April 1915, and remember their dead in other wars. As the numbers of returned soldiers, or "Diggers", have dwindled over the years, Anzac Day marches and ceremonies have swelled as their descendants have stepped into their shoes.

For 81 years, since the first Anzac Day in 1916, solemnity and commercial-free have been

the watchwords. Enter Mr Murdoch, sometimes known as the "Dirty Digger" over his tabloid newspapers. Superleague recently struck a deal with the New South Wales branch of the Returned Services League (RSL), the veterans' organisation. In return for using the word "Anzac" in connection with the Australia-New Zealand match today, using the Army's rising-sun symbol on players' uniforms and offering a trophy in the shape of the Australian army slouch hat, Superleague would donate A\$20,000 (£10,000) towards a walkway that the RSL is building to commemorate soldiers who died in New Guinea in the Second World War.

When the deal was revealed, John Rihot, chief executive of Superleague, deflected the resulting flak by denying that the Murdoch organisation had bought the Anzac legend for commercial gain. "We're enhancing it," he said. "We're creating a young audience."

But many old soldiers are outraged. Alf Garland, a retired brigadier and former RSL president, attacked the Test's television promotion, which compares football teams to soldiers in battle. "I don't think these people should be using



Patriot games: The use of the Anzac name by Murdoch (inset) to promote the Rugby League test clash between Australian and New Zealand today has for many cheapened the memory of those who fought and died at Gallipoli, below right

Anzac as a commercial proposition," he said. "I'll be going to the dawn service and remembering the people I served with who never came back. That's what it should be."

While the Anzacs were attacking him, Mr Murdoch was being challenged on a second front by opponents of his plan to turn another Australian public icon, the Sydney Showgrounds, into a studio and film theme park for Twentieth Century Fox, the Hollywood studio he owns. Opponents of the deal yesterday took it to court in Sydney. They are led by Sinclair Hill, a prominent, wealthy

Australian farmer and a friend of the Prince of Wales, whom he once taught polo. Mr Hill last week paid almost A\$40,000 for a full-page advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald, a one-Murdoch paper, in the form of an open letter to the magazine.

"The 71 acres of the showgrounds are a national treasure," Mr Hill wrote. "Every Australian hates your Fox destruction of our heritage and history. Destruction of our soul."

Mr Hill then appealed to Mr Murdoch to build his studio elsewhere: "There is no greater



Australian than you, Rupert, and I again ask you to make one of the truly great decisions of your life, a Murdoch contribution to Australia. PULL THE PIN."

Mr Hill's open letter followed a direct plea to Mr Murdoch in a 15-minute telephone conversation between the two men several weeks earlier.

As he prepared to go to the New South Wales Court of Appeal yesterday, Mr Hill said: "I was born with a silver spoon, and part of my responsibility is to help the whole cultural betterment of the country. This showground land is part of the entanglement of people and history. I want Murdoch to leave it behind as a public park that we could build into the spirit of an Australian republic, which he supports."

"I'm a republican too. I hope Prince Charles comes out here and helps us become a republic. He's a big man, a fine human being. I will suggest to Prince Charles that he come here and help us become a republic."

The showgrounds, public land since 1811, were offered to Mr Murdoch by Australia's former Labor government in a deal that it hoped would secure support from the Murdoch press at

Greco-Turkish relations show a thaw

Tony Barber
Europe Editor

To the untrained eye, the steps Greece and Turkey are taking towards improving ties are so small as to be almost imperceptible. Yet the Greek-Turkish relationship has been paralysed by hostility and mistrust for so long that any movement seems a change for the better.

Greek Deputy Foreign Minister, Georgios Papandreou, and his Turkish counterpart, Onur Oymen, agreed at a meeting in Malta last week to set up a committee of independent experts from both countries to discuss how to improve relations.

Despite stressing that the experts would not represent their governments and that no one should expect "immediate and sweeping results", Mr Papandreou pronounced himself satisfied that this was the right way forward for the two countries.

But the process is likely to be slow because Greece does not anticipate any face-to-face meetings between the experts. Instead they intend to communicate indirectly, through the European Union's Dutch presidency. Moreover, Greece has been at pains to underline that the experts' talks will not even constitute a "dialogue", a word which in diplomatic parlance implies something friendly and official. Rather, they will focus on "procedural issues relating to Greek-Turkish disputes".

Of these there are plenty, ranging from the Cyprus conflict to arguments over territorial waters, islands, airspace and mineral rights in the Aegean Sea.

In what looks like a conciliatory gesture ahead of the talks, Greece has postponed military flights in Greek Cypriot airspace and has put off a joint exercise with the Greek Cypriot national guard. But the small initiatives towards Turkey have proved too much for recalibrants in Greece's ruling Pasok party. Thirty-two members of parliament are opposed to almost any form of talks with Turkey and similar intransigence is felt in Turkey, too.

THE World of Lily Wong
by LARRY FEIGEN
© 1997

The Open University

What can the Open University do for you?

We can give you a recognised BA or BSc degree like any other University, but you don't have to give up work to do it.

Just as important the Open University can open up a whole new world of interests, challenges and achievements. There are over 150 courses to choose from in arts, sciences, social sciences, computing, technology, modern languages, mathematics, business management, law, education, and health and social welfare.

If you are 18 or over and resident in the European Union, you're eligible. No previous qualifications are needed. Some financial help may be available.

Through OU supported open learning

You don't go away to the Open University. It comes to you. There's no need to give up work, or build your social life around evening classes.

You learn through specially written texts and audio/video materials, radio and TV programmes, computer software and home kits for some science and technology subjects.

But you're never isolated. Your own personal tutor gives regular tuition and marks assignments which are returned to you. When you need help and advice - or simply a word of encouragement - your tutor is just a phone call away.

Support also comes from your fellow students. There are over 300 Open University study centres around the country, where you can attend group tutorials or meet your self-help study group. Some courses also have week-long residential schools.

The flexible way to learn

You're free to plan your own degree - so, for example, you can study modern art and computer studies as part of the same qualification. You can also take a single course with absolutely no commitment to gaining a full degree. And if you return to study later, your previous examination pass will count towards your qualification.

Find out more today

Over 2 million people have studied with the Open University and another 12,700 people will gain their BA or BSc degrees this year.

To find out how you can join them, use the coupon or call today.

Send to: The Open University, PO Box 625, Milton Keynes MK1 1TY

☐ Please send me a copy of the Courses, Diploma and BA/BSc Degree prospectus.

Name

Address

Postcode Tel

OU Hotline (24 hours) 01908 379199

University education and training open to all adults

CAR INSURANCE

Looking for the LOWEST premium?

PHONE FREE 0500 333 600

TO CLAIM YOUR FREE ROAD ATLAS PLEASE QUOTE REF 2546

LINES ARE OPEN 9am-9pm WEEKDAYS, 9am-5pm SATURDAYS.

DIAL DIRECT

Exclusive Road Atlas FREE with every quote

Social Phobias?

(Special) Do you worry yourself sick before going to parties... making dates... eating out... talking to your boss... speaking before a group? Things don't have to be this way!

A new book, *How to Meet People and Make Friends*, reveals the simple techniques that can be used by anyone to become more self-confident, self-assured, more popular - and more successful and happier in life. Here are just a few facts covered in this book:

- The three best ways to start a conversation - with anyone.
- The secret of being totally relaxed while talking in anyone - even total strangers.
- How to unlock the real you and make people like you.
- How to never feel unsure, self-conscious, or uncomfortable while having a conversation.
- 6 secrets to keep a conversation going.
- 5 secrets to making people want to talk to you.

- How to get people to open up to you (even shy people).
- 50 great tips to improve your conversation.
- How to ensure you remember a person's name.
- How to use humour in your conversations.
- How to use eye contact and body language that can draw people to you like a magnet.
- How to never feel out of place at a social function.

To order your copy of *How to Meet People and Make Friends*, send your name, address & book title with payment (Cheque/Switch with issue no./Visa or Mastercard with exp. date) of £9.95 inclusive of postage & handling to: Carnell Ltd, Dept MPN, Alresford, Colchester, Essex CO7 8AP, or phone their 24 hr order line on 01206 825600 (quoting above Dept code). Allow up to 14 days for delivery. You may return the book any time within 3 months for a refund if not satisfied.

BRITAIN SWINGS BACK TO THE RIGHT

UP TO **5.0%** GROSS P.A. NOTICE ACCOUNT

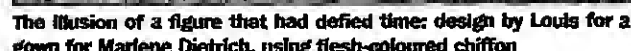
UP TO **6.4%** GROSS P.A. NOTICE ACCOUNT

The swing is on! Savers are flocking to Alliance & Leicester.

If you have a branch based notice account with the Abbey National, then you should consider making the switch to Alliance & Leicester today. Our new Platinum Plus notice account offers higher interest rates on balances of £2,500 or more!

So if you are with the Abbey National, follow the trend and open a Platinum Plus account today. For details of your nearest Alliance & Leicester branch, call 0800 412 214.

ALLIANCE & LEICESTER



هكذا من الأصل

The swan, the ducklings and the Three Pilchards

We are beginning to crack. We cannot face writing another leading article today about the unanswered questions of this election. So let us turn to a subject of real, undisputed importance. Are you pro-swan or pro-duck?

This is a question much larger than the Cornish village of Polperro, where it has split the residents. The whole nation should take sides. Pollsters with their clipboards should drop their tedious questions about the European Union and find out what people think about dead ducklings.

Freddie the swan has been behaving as nature intended: that is, red in bill and webbed foot. The swan, which has lived in the village harbour for 10 years, has been slaughtering ducklings, which it sees as threatening the food supply of its own offspring. This is a grisly sight, apparently, turning the sleepy port into a maelstrom of carnage and destruction, and upsetting tourists and local children.

This drama in the animal kingdom raises large questions. Charles Darwin would have wrestled with the implications for human morality. The swan is not, of course, obeying the dictates of Nature, but of his genes, programmed to ensure their survival and therefore the continuation of the species. Hence his genocidal (or should we say, speciedical?) instincts. As tourists and residents ponder the fluffy remains of

local mallard offspring floating in the water, they have to ask themselves if humans are anything more than vehicles for their own selfish genes.

Sadly, the residents of Polperro do not seem to have paused to consider these matters. Instead they have rushed to judgement, lining up with the pro-duck faction or the pro-swan faction, and some of them have behaved rather badly.

So now there are two ethical dilemmas to consider: the rights and wrongs of birds, and the rights and wrongs of human responses to the birds.

On the first, the RSPCA has taken a hard line. There is no natural food source in Polperro for swans or ducks, so both species must rely on the bread thrown to them by people, or rubbish and sewage they can scavenge. Human generosity is such that there has been an explosion in the duck population, says the RSPCA, and Freddie is bound to defend the food for his own offspring. The RSPCA's line is to let nature – or genetics – take its course, and to condemn roundly those residents who tried to get rid of the swan by spraying it with washing-up liquid.

On the second point, the RSPCA is absolutely right, and there can be no excuse for trying to kill Freddie by poisoning him. On the broader issue, however, Freddie (and the ducks) only survive in Polperro as a kind of outdoor pet, entirely dependent on human



ONE CANADA SQUARE, CANARY WHARF, LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE 071-238 2000 / 071-345 2000 FAX 071-238 2435 / 071-345 2435

beings. So if the human beings want to move him or curtail his murderous activities, they have a moral right to do so, provided they avoid cruelty.

The trouble is that Freddie and his mate, Phreda, are homing swans, and would probably return if someone tried to relocate them. So there are only three options. Someone has got to shoot these swans (we appeal for more information about the presence or absence of cypriots); or Polperro gets used to dead ducklings among the fetsam and jetsam; or people have got to stop feeding the blessed things, and then all the birds will go and live happily elsewhere.

This solution would seem too logical for the residents of Polperro, who have resorted to the kind of unmentionable tactics and petty hatreds that lie beneath the surface of any pretty village. Dead ducklings have been pushed through the letterbox of the landlord of the Three Pilchards, who was a swan-backer (although he has since switched, in one of the more baffling twists in this story).

Michael Howard and Jack Straw are believed to be on their way to Cornwall now to stage photo-opportunities overlooking the harbour, where they will try to outdo one another in lurid

condemnation of the teenage boy behind the bloody postings who has been reprimanded – but let off – by the local constable.

It cannot be long before Tony Blair proposes a Royal Commission, or John Major sets up a task force, or Paddy Ashdown offers to let the swan and his mate live in his back garden in Yecovil.

None of them, in this post-ideological age, will address the real philosophical issues raised by this little local difficulty. We must not simply be tough on the causes. Polperro, with its 1,585 population, ought to be a strong community, capable of resolving these kinds of conflict without provocation and rudeness. (The pub landlord responded to his tormentor by putting up a poster which read: "Latest score: Swan 6, Ducks 0." This was uncalled for.)

The trouble is that there are no real communities any more. Recent academic studies tried and failed to find a single village in England in which more than half the population was born there. And Polperro is turned every summer into a giant holiday camp, with 17,000 visitors. In these circumstances, it is surprising that people lose sight of their responsibilities to each other?

These are the questions that people are asking, up and down the country, at bus stops, in pubs (especially the Three Pilchards) and in focus groups.

But is it not just typical that no other newspaper is treating these issues with the seriousness they deserve? Instead, they are distracted by the latest populist posturing of meo in suits in windowless rooms in London. Let us turn our minds as a nation to a village on the south coast of Cornwall which stands as a challenge to our moral universe.

EU dragons need teeth

In recent days, we have heard a lot about European dragons. Little Englanders in both main parties seem to be running scared. But the lesson taught by the Calais blockade – lifted yesterday – was how weak the European Union still is. Freedom of commercial movement and fair fishing policies that conserve stocks – these either require Brussels to be given direct powers of enforcement or the means to compel nation states to fulfil their obligations... meaning more majority voting in the Council of Ministers. You do not need to be pro-Europe to urge reform of central EU institutions. One of the strongest justifications for European integration is freedom of trade, which can only be guaranteed if the Commission has teeth.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hospitals that help patients to face death

Sir: No one could have read John Hoyland's moving description of his stepfather's death (22 April) without feeling both anger and sadness. Thirty years after the birth of the modern hospice movement, with the foundation of St Christopher's Hospice by Dame Cicely Saunders, this experience remains all too common.

In our view, it is the right of every person with a life-threatening illness to receive appropriate palliative care – care which integrates physical and psychosocial care. Whether or not they do so depends on the availability of resources as well as professional skills and attitudes. It is the responsibility of every health care professional to provide palliative care, calling in specialist colleagues if the need arises, as an integral component of good clinical practice.

What is to be done? John Hoyland acknowledges that hospices would have provided a "supportive, loving and cheerful environment" not found in the hospitals that cared for his stepfather. The growing number of palliative care teams in acute hospitals provides another solution – but only if their role is understood and they are asked to help.

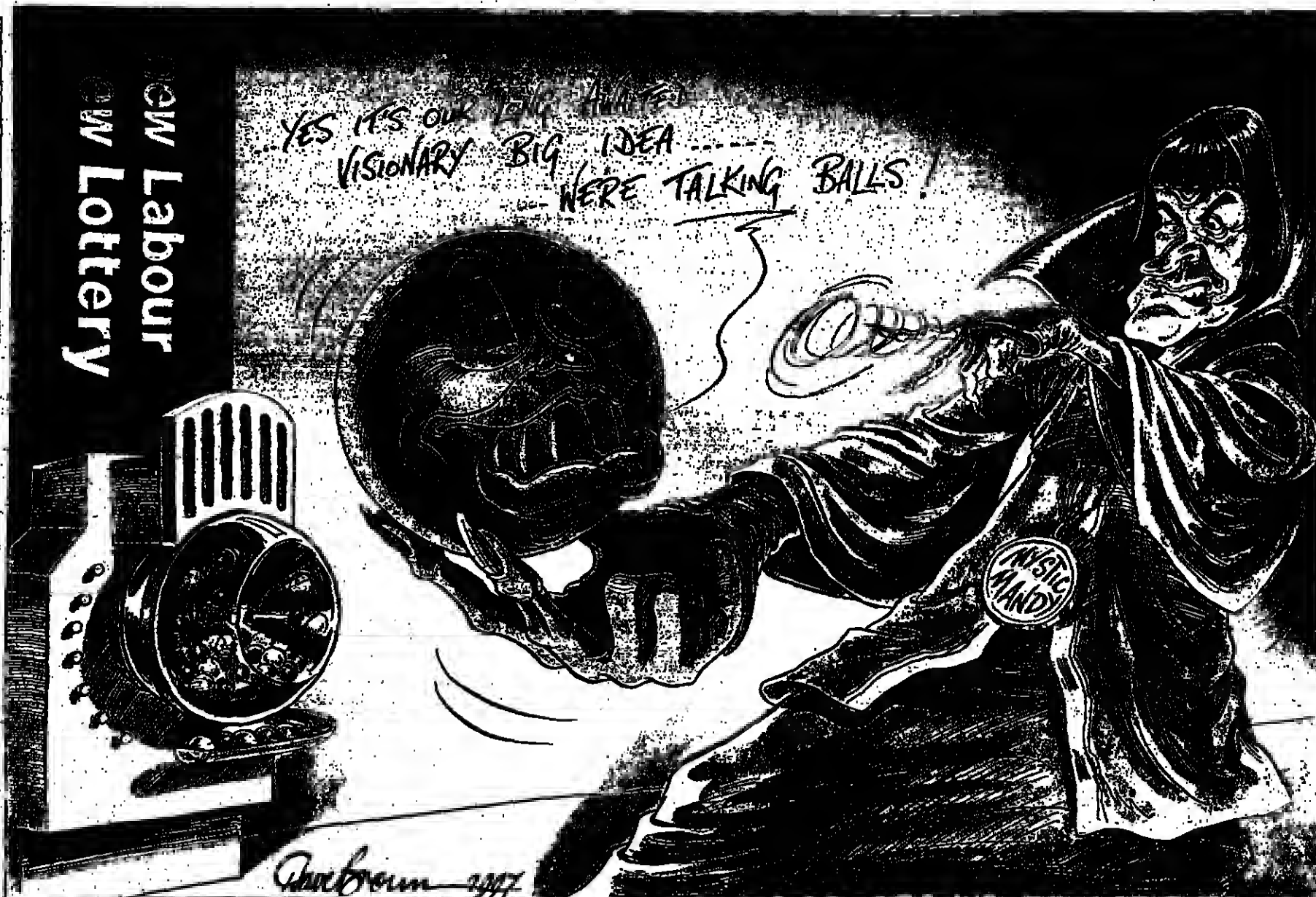
JEAN GARRIN
Executive Director
National Council for Hospice and Specialist Palliative Care Services
London WC1

Sir: When my father, aged 82, suffered a stroke last year and had to be collected by ambulance from the floor of his bungalow in Swaffham, Norfolk, he was taken to the community hospital up the road. We were asked to consider the next step: getting him a place in a nursing home and selling his property. This was all done with great sensitivity. However, because Christmas was imminent, staff and social workers agreed that he should stay at Swaffham Cottage Hospital until the New Year so that he would not be upset.

Over the next few days Dad suffered a further series of small strokes. On Boxing Day we found him a ghost of himself, both physically and mentally. His doctor was waiting to speak to us. Sitting in the nurses' room, amid Christmas gifts, the doctor gently asked us what we wished to do next. We could ask to have Dad transferred to the big district hospital at King's Lynn, where every effort would be made to resuscitate him, or we could leave him quietly where he was. We children had no hesitation in saying we preferred Dad to be left in peace. We were confident this was what he wanted. He would get no quality of life from an extra few months bed-bound and semi-conscious.

Once we had made our decision plain, the doctor affirmed that it would be his too and he was glad this was the course we had chosen. Dad lasted a couple more days. He could not eat but was given a little to drink. He lay asleep in a clean bed, always newly washed, in crisply ironed pyjamas and with his hair combed, until he slipped away.

We felt that doctors and nurses were exemplary in their approach and treatment. Suffering was not prolonged, neither was anyone in the family left with a feeling of guilt. There were no indignities inflicted on Dad and, though death is always accompanied by a sadness, his treatment at the end



could not have been better. I still feel a great sense of debt to the medical staff attached to Swaffham Cottage Hospital. Kindness, not gross medical intervention, released us all.
JILL GALE
Hampton, Middlesex

Sir: As someone who has worked for 19 years in the NHS, initially as a nurse and more recently as a doctor, I read John Hoyland's article about the death of his stepfather with a growing feeling of pain, sadness and shame.

A knee-jerk reaction of many in the profession will be to deny the accusations or to blame underfunding, shortage of staff or current management techniques. Many will point to the fact that the introduction of the speciality of geriatrics was aimed to tackle the problems of poor communication that may result from the piecemeal treatment of multi-system diseases so common in the elderly, and argue for an increase in resources dedicated to this Cinderella branch of the health service.

Others will, rightly, highlight the role of the GP in co-ordinating care of the individual and suggest greater reduction in the role of hospitals. These points have been made forcefully within the medical and nursing professions for many years. However, a walk through the accident and emergency departments, corridors and wards of most of our hospitals will show that, at the level of the individual patient, the system frequently fails to deliver a humane and efficient service. There is a dire need for "care" as well as "cure" to be made a priority in the NHS.
ANDREW HALL
Hexham, Northumberland

Viewer choice in digital age

Sir: As the introduction of digital television in the UK is imminent, it is crucial that we understand the role that Electronic Programme Guides play in shaping digital television.

Over the next year or so the style of television viewing will change dramatically. Viewers will potentially receive up to 200 channels into their homes; but there will not be 200 buttons on their remote control. Viewers will have to use on-screen navigation tools to access the programmes they want.

It is the Electronic Programme Guide (EPG) which will determine the services and programmes the viewers use. There is an urgent need to establish a code of conduct for navigation systems which ensures the needs and wishes of the viewers are adequately addressed. Viewers must have fast and easy access to schedules and services as well as to favoured channels or programmes.

The Tongue Report on public service broadcasting in the digital age, adopted by the European Parliament in 1996, emphasises the importance of fair and universal access to universally funded services through all delivery systems. In particular, the report calls for an obligation to ensure that public service programming is easy to find for viewers.

I welcome the Ofcom Guidelines (March 1997), which recognise the significance of EPGs and stress the principles of easy access and fair

competition. It is now up to the ITC, as the regulatory body concerned with quality broadcasting for viewers, to take this further.

It is of paramount importance that the viewer remains at the centre of regulators' concerns. The viewer's own preferences must be central to any regulation proposed. I believe the best result could be achieved by producing a working model of an EPG to research viewers' response in advance of any final regulatory solution.

I have every confidence that if the views of the consumers are considered at the outset, the ITC's proposals would provide EPG standards which would ensure quality broadcasting in a multichannel digital environment.
CAROLE TONGUE MEP
(London East, Lab)
Ilford, Essex

US threat to our airspace

Sir: Professor Philip Lawrence (letter, 23 April) writes about the importance of the aerospace industry to Europe, and the threats presented to it from the US.

There is a further threat he did not mention: the Regional Airspace Initiative now being advanced by the US. This, in anticipation of the proposed expansion of Nato, would place all air control, civil and military, for the whole of Europe – Western, Central and Eastern – under Nato; in effect, under the US military.

US industries would benefit enormously.

Last year, Neil Kinnock, the relevant EU commissioner, presented a White Paper on air traffic management to the European Commission, advocating the formation of a single, common regulatory body for European airspace, able to deal with both civil and military aspects of its use, and which other, non-EU European governments could adhere to. Last autumn, the Commission put a formal proposal to the Council of Ministers for the appropriate transformation of Eurocontrol into such a collaborative body.

The Major government has of course been "reluctant" to pool any sovereignty in such a European body – whether on "national" grounds or because the Americans wouldn't like it is not clear.
ELIZABETH YOUNG
London W2

Facts are treason to bellicose Brits

Sir: What has happened to informed debate? What is in Britain's interest that is not in the interest of any other member of the European Union? What is so wrong with the recent statement by Jacques Santer (report, 22 April)? The British electorate must be the worst informed people on the planet when it comes to the EU.

During this election we have had much noise and heat generated, particularly by the so-called

Euro-sceptics who seem to regard European Union and a single currency as a continuation of the Second World War. The arguments against Europe typically use words and phrases such as "surroder", "German domination", "fighting for Britain's interests", "European threat" and so on.

This is the kind of bellicose language that would appeal to bullies, bigots and those ignorant nationalists who like to "remember the war". Each time anyone says anything remotely factual or positive about Europe or the implications of a single currency, they are regarded as committing some sort of treasonable offence.
PETER VINTNER
London SW19

Sir: I have just returned from a visit to a mining operation, small but with enormous potential, on a Mediterranean island under the aegis of the EU. Despite 30 per cent unemployment and the willingness of the local skilled workforce, a combination of EU restrictions and local laws forbids nationals to work one minute over 48 hours a week. I was therefore surprised to see bulldozers, excavators and dumper trucks going nineteen to the dozen on Saturday and Sunday. They were all manned by Australians.

A friend who runs a horticultural business in Yorkshire recently visited Holland. At seven o'clock one Friday evening, sales discussions between him and a Dutch manufacturer were interrupted by a banging on the factory door. It was the local police – demanding to know why the lights were on and to ascertain that all the workers had gone home.
MATTHEW ROBINSON
London W8

Co-op movement down but not out

Sir: As a conviction co-operator, I question some of the assertions made by Hamish McRae ("Are we really becoming less co-operative?", 23 April).

The established co-operative movement may be down but it is certainly not out, with many societies improving on the poor results of past years (for example, the Oxford, Swindon and Gloucester Society increased profits 33 per cent last year to £5.1m).

Additionally, a rapidly growing number of new co-operatives of various kinds are being set up all the time. These include credit unions and informal food co-ops as well as housing and workers' societies.

Agricultural buying co-ops now account for a larger turnover than the rest of the consumer movement combined and more than their private-sector competitors in this market.

I trust that all those who believe in the co-operative ideal will join their local retail society, shop in its stores and help to revitalise democracy and accountability by attending meetings and making their voices heard.
RICHARD BICKLE
Norwich

Nation of beggars and fund-raisers

Sir: Whatever the result of the election the next government will look more to charities for the delivery of welfare. The "charitisation" of the economy has been a feature of the last 18 years as much as privatisation has been.

The view of the Voluntary Action History Society is that for charities to thrive, a good strong public sector is a base requisite, without which anarchy and waste prevail. The pre-Beveridge lessons are there: charities and hospitals stumbled from financial crisis to crisis, provision was patchy and largely inefficient, and fraud and corruption rife. Today, charities are forced to spend resources in a grossly uneconomical way in the unseemly scramble for funds.

As England reaches the Millennium it has become a nation of fund-raisers, yet all parties want to be rid of beggars on the street.
COLIN ROCHESTER (Chair)
DR JUSTIN DAVIS SMITH (Secretary)
RODNEY HEDLEY (Committee Member)
Voluntary Action History Society
London SE5

Feel good enough for a gamble?

Sir: Our foreign-owned media have conspired to hide the feel-good factor from us. Overseas commentators, especially those in Europe, are bemused by the fact that the Conservative government gets little or no credit for creating the most successful economy in Europe.

Canvassing on the doorstep, we find that the feel-good factor is emerging in a strange way. Some voters are so confident in the future that they feel that they can safely gamble on a period of socialist rule. This is a back-handed compliment to the Conservative government: but at what risk?

EDWARD KELLET-BOWMAN, MEP
(Ipswich, Test & Avon, Con)
Christchurch, Dorset

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2093
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

CWS vows to hound Lanica chief and his City co-conspirators 'to their graves'

تمت من الأصل

Melmoth the Warrior has excelled himself



COMMENT

The CWS chief executive's sense of rage at the disloyalty and thievery of one of his own executives is one thing. But it is nothing against the anger he feels towards the City for its fee-hungry willingness to enter this sordid conspiracy.

With Andrew Regan and his team in full flight and the Co-op promising to pursue them to their graves, the time has perhaps come to ask how the young financier, backed by all those highly paid City advisers, could so horribly have misjudged this extraordinary smash-and-grab raid.

The first setback came when the plans leaked. Though newspapers and share traders thrive on such things, leaking scarcely ever works to the advantage of the bidder, for it gives the target time to muster its defences and prepare the ground against invaders. In this case the leak was near disastrous. The Regan assault was in effect a consortium bid. Even when things are going to plan, consortium bids are notoriously difficult to keep on the rails. It only requires one of the moving parts to break ranks, or get cold feet, and the whole thing falls apart.

But perhaps the Regan camp's most serious mistake was to underestimate the opposition. Graham Melmoth, chief executive of the CWS, has proved a feisty and highly effective fighter. If Mr Regan believed the CWS was such an enfeebled organisation that it would simply roll over and let its tummy be tickled, he could not have been more wrong. The Co-op has excelled itself with one of the most hard-hitting, irreverent and masterful defence campaigns in years. Using the press and the courts as its main battle weapons, the Co-op has managed to see off the bid before it was ever tabled.

Nor is Mr Melmoth prepared to back off now that he has won and allow the City to sweep the whole thing under the carpet. Virtually every financial regulator in the land from the Inland Revenue's special investigations unit to the DTI, from Imro to the Serious Fraud Office, and from the Securities and Futures Authority to the Stock Exchange, is being prevailed upon to investigate the matter and act. No wonder Nomura got cold feet. It's in enough trouble already back home in Japan without a British financial scandal to cope with as well.

Now that the balloon has gone up, we are being treated to an extraordinary and disreputable display of City advisers running for cover. According to the Co-op, almost no legal undertaking is too great for these people to sign if it means keeping these matters from coming to court. Never darken our doors again? Yes, yes, we'll sign that, no problem.

Mr Melmoth's sense of rage at the disloyalty and thievery of one of his own executives is one thing. But it is nothing against the anger he feels towards the City for its fee-hungry willingness to enter this sordid conspiracy, knowingly making use of stolen CWS material. He is right to push for the strongest possible action and retribution. This has been a shameful episode for the City, matching some of its darkest moments.

One good thing may have come out of it, however. The affair has blown away some dusty old cobwebs within the Co-operative

movement, forcing it to re-examine its role and purpose in the modern world. Change is now inevitable. The only question is what shape it will take.

Sentiment unlikely to rescue Eurotunnel

It is a rum sort of rights issue when the existing shares have virtually to double in price before the new ones can be offered at any sort of discount. But then Eurotunnel is a rum sort of company. Barring a miracle or a lapse into insanity in the markets, this particular rights issue is one that Eurotunnel's long-suffering shareholders will not have to worry their heads about.

The arithmetic works like this. When Eurotunnel launches its £8.7bn debt refinancing this summer it intends to swap about £1bn of that debt for shares priced at around £1.30. Since the shares are currently languishing at 71p it would take a renating of truly heroic proportions to get them to the point where anyone would want to touch the new equity, save for Eurotunnel's bankers. They are bent over the proverbial barrel and have little choice but to take the shares or put the company into liquidation.

It is a fair bet, however, that somewhere among the 720,000 tortured souls who make up Eurotunnel's share register there will be the odd patriotic Englishman or crazed French dentist who insists on his inalienable

right to throw more good money after bad into this hole in the ground.

It is just conceivable that sentiment will move Eurotunnel's way. But for that to happen it will have to get another 35 years on its concession and the Anglo-French Safety Authority will have to bless a freight shuttle design which is akin to a potential inferno on wheels.

But at least for once the interests of banks and shareholders are aligned. There is every incentive to get the share price up because the nearer the strike price gets to the market price, the more likely it is to tempt shareholders into the water. That would allow the banks to exchange their debt at par when it is trading in the secondary debt market at around 40 per cent of face value.

Fantasy? Almost certainly but that may not stop some shareholders taking the plunge even if the prospectus has a health warning printed on every page.

Iverson slips on her first banana skin

So now we know. Despite her high reputation as the woman who revived the fortunes of Mothercare, the woman who can do no wrong, Ann Iverson, cannot walk on water after all. Last year when Laura Ashley shares were riding high at 220p, valuing the company at 50 times prospective earnings, the market was factoring in something

miraculous from her. Reality broke through yesterday but not before giving poor Laura a brutal spanking as the shares lost almost one third of their value. Can it be long before Ms Iverson follows the path trodden out of the door by her likeable predecessor, Jim Maxmin? Over-ordering stock and having to slash prices to shift it does, after all, seem a pretty fundamental and wholly avoidable management mistake.

But perhaps such a harsh judgement is premature. Ms Iverson claims almost every aspect of the business needed fixing when she came nearly two years ago.

She has been attempting to improve the merchandise, reposition the brand, get manufacturing costs under control and pursue a strategy of aggressive expansion in the toughest of markets all at the same time. It is hardly surprising there has been a hiccup. There may be more.

Up until now, her performance has actually been pretty good. Her latest set of profits at £16.2m were last achieved back in 1989. The previous regime hardly made any profits for five years. So while this is a bad slip up, she's not been doing too badly.

We are still a long way from Ms Iverson's target of double-digit margins on sales, but she refuses to abandon it and still promises to reach it within four years of her appointment.

Ms Iverson can perhaps be forgiven this, her first banana skin, but she better just pray it is also her last.

Government urged to cool economy by raising taxes

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The next government should raise taxes rather than interest rates to cool down the overheating economy, a leading business organisation said yesterday. The British Chambers of Commerce warned of wage pressures at home because of skill shortages and damage to sales overseas because of the strong pound.

This analysis is backed by a new forecast from the London Business School published this morning. It predicts that growth will exceed 3 per cent this year, taking the number of unemployment benefit claimants below 1.5 million. Tougher policy action is needed to head off an inflationary boom, the report concludes, and taxes should be used to take some of the strain off interest rates.

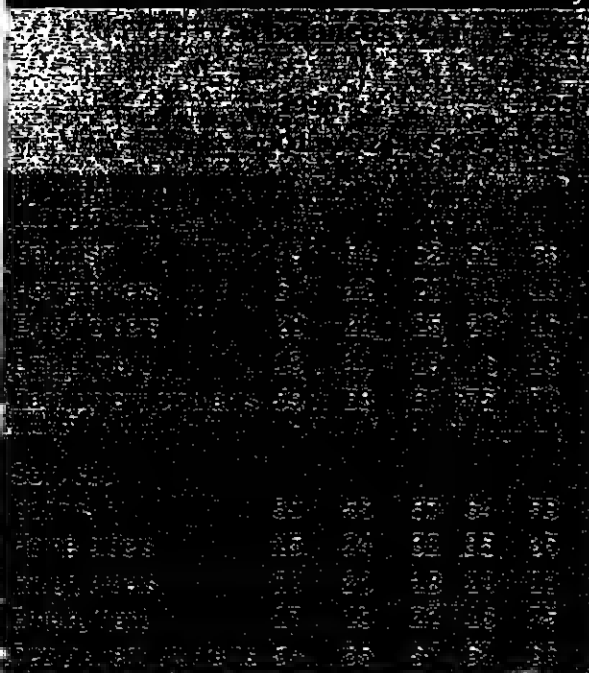
Both followed a similar call by the Confederation of British Industry on Wednesday.

Official figures on Britain's recent trade performance published yesterday showed tentative signs that the increase in sterling, during the past six months has started to hit export volumes. The BCC survey was the latest in a series reporting a tailing off in new export orders.

Yesterday's survey, which covers services as well as manufacturing, reported the lowest exports for four years. In manufacturing sales growth had continued to slow, while in services the growth had slowed from its record level in the final quarter of last year.

The weaker export outlook was offset by the strength of domestic demand. Official figures for national output in the first quarter of this year, due this morning, are expected to show

British Chambers of Commerce Survey



growth well above the economy's sustainable trend.

Job creation plans remained buoyant, according to the chambers of commerce survey, with services companies planned employment at the highest level this decade. But this was leading to recruitment difficulties.

David Richardson, BCC president, said there was a danger skill shortages would fuel wage inflation. "The priority must be to tackle the skills problem which is swiftly becoming the Achilles' heel of the British economy," he said.

Ian Peters, deputy director-general, said: "Whilst many commentators believe that interest rates will rise after the election in order to contain inflation, this will have the

damaging effect of hurting manufacturing investment and export competitiveness."

Separate figures yesterday showed the gap between imports and exports had widened.

The deficit on trade in goods rose to £758m in February from £535m the previous month. March's deficit with non-EU countries increased to £606m from £437m in February.

Lower import prices kept the import bill subdued. The underlying volume of imports in the latest three months' figures was 6.4 per cent higher than a year earlier. Export volumes were up 6.2 per cent over the same period, but fell 1.5 per cent in the latest month and were virtually flat in the latest three months.

Strong sterling knocks Vickers and ICI profits

Michael Harrison

Two of British industry's best-known names yesterday fell victim to the strength of sterling as both Vickers and ICI warned that the rampant pound would hit profits this year.

Vickers unsettled the market by disclosing that first-half profits would be less than the £31.8m achieved last year because of falling export orders and thinner margins. The announcement prompted a 10 per cent slump in its share price from 226p to 202.5p.

Sir Richard Lloyd, chairman, told the annual shareholders' meeting that profit for the first quarter was below that for the corresponding period last year.

"Export orders - and let me remind you that in recent years Vickers has exported on average about 50 per cent of UK turnover - are proving harder to obtain and profit margins on them tend to be thinning," he said.

Meanwhile ICI warned that the pound's rise was likely to wipe something like £120m from profits this year. The

company's chairman, Sir Ronnie Hampel told the annual shareholders' meeting: "The strength of sterling is worrying and, if it remains high, can only have a significant and debilitating effect of British industry and exports in particular."

The comments came alongside the announcement of a sharp fall in first quarter profits from £202m to £65m and helped drive ICI shares down by 20p to 720p in heavy trading.

Analysts are now pencilling in profits of around £500m compared with earlier estimates of £600m-£650m. When ICI announced its full year figures in February, it said that the pound's strength was likely to knock £80m-£90m from this year's profits.

Since then, however, sterling has appreciated still further. In the first quarter the stronger pound reduced profits by about £40m compared with £15m in the final quarter of 1996.

ICI said that exchange rate movements together with weak prices in its Tioxide and polyester divisions had reduced profits by £150m. Ris-

ing oil prices also exacerbated the squeeze on margins and depressed exports, it added.

The company refused to comment on reports that it is preparing a £40m offer for Unilever's specialty chemicals business, which was put up for sale earlier this year. Nor did it have any news to report on the planned flotation of Tioxide.

However, the strength of sterling may force it to accelerate its job-cutting programme this year. ICI intends to shed a further 10,000 jobs over the next two years, taking the workforce down to about 55,000.

In the last four years it has shed a fifth of its workforce. About 7,000 jobs will be direct losses and a further 3,000 will disappear from the payroll when the Tioxide flotation is completed.

Earlier this year British Steel confirmed that it was bringing forward its job reduction programme to shed 5,000 to 10,000 workers over the next five years, mainly as a result of the currency squeeze on profits.

Investment column, page 24

Banks told to prepare for EMU

update on preparations for the euro, depends on decisions at the pan-European level, many of which have not yet been taken. The Bank urges the European Monetary Institute and EU Commission to press ahead with decisions on key issues.

The Bank's warning not to count on EMU being delayed concerns preparations in the City's financial markets rather than high street banks and shops. The focus of this quarter's report is how London's financial markets must adapt

to the new currency, and it includes the recommendations of a working party concerning issues such as whether and how different types of security should be re-denominated from national currencies into euros. But even though UK practi-

tioners have reached a conclusion, Europe-wide agreement is still needed, the Bank said.

The Bank of England is continuing to lobby the French and Germans over Target, the planned inter-bank payments system under the single currency. It has so far failed to win their agreement that the UK can use the system if it opts out of EMU.

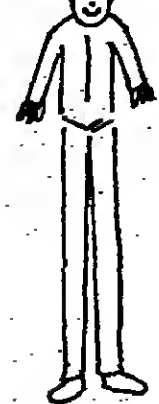
Space.

There's lots more of it in Emirates' new Business Class.

More room: up to 52" seat pitch on Airbus aircraft and one of the most luxurious seats in the sky on our Boeing 777s.

More comfort: supportive leg rest on all Business Class seats. More of the same: personal video, phone, fax and the finest champagne, wines and cuisine. Need we say more?

Just as well!



Emirates

THE FINEST IN THE SKY

OVER 100 INTERNATIONAL AWARDS. 41 INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS. FOR DETAILS CALL EMIRATES OR YOUR LOCAL TRAVEL AGENT. <http://www.emirates.com/>

on Su
r. Sou
US G.
p-seek
rid, nec
s to one
3-4-5-6
ATP to
ashed ye
he last
ness in
g Brugg
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

business

Regulator set to approve British Gas price cuts in South-west

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Clare Spottiswoode, the gas industry regulator, is poised to approve British Gas's controversial package of selective price cuts in a ruling which could provoke uproar among rival suppliers and have long-term consequences for competition.

Her decision on the discount scheme, which has cut some British Gas bills by up to 12 per cent in the first domestic competition trial area in the South-west of England, will not be announced until after the election. Earlier indications from Ofgas, the watchdog, of a pre-poll announcement were optimistic given an unexpectedly large response to the public consultation exercise.

Centrica, the merged

British Gas supply business, revealed the price cuts last month after losing 20 per cent of its customers to rival suppliers in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset since the trial began last May.

The package, the first time British Gas has varied its tariff on a regional basis, also gives direct debit customers a 6 per cent cut, doubling their discount, if they sign up for a year.

Ms Spottiswoode is understood to have told some rival gas companies that she is "minded" to let Centrica continue with the price cuts, known as Value Plus. The move would be another sign of the thaw in relations with the company since it demerged from British Gas, now BG, in February. Earlier this week Ms Spottiswoode indicated she would be sympathetic to Cen-

trica's efforts to avoid Labour's windfall utility tax.

Ofgas has also studied the wording of the Gas Act which paved the way for competition. It says her role is to "establish" competition but does not say she must "sustain". Centrica has argued the loss of 20 per cent of its market share means competition has been achieved.

Critics of Value Plus argue it would transform the competitive playing field. The chief executive of a large oil group, who did not want to be named, warned the price cuts would discourage the company from moving into the domestic gas market. He said the group was waiting to see how competition developed and would examine potential profit margins.

Ofgas said it had received more than 80 responses to the

consultation process, of which more than half were in Centrica's favour. The company has mobilised considerable support from some unusual sources, including letters to Ofgas from three of its banks privately arguing that the cuts were a vital plank of its business plan.

The Gas Consumers Council recognised Value Plus would benefit some consumers but strongly opposed its introduction. Sue Shipman, GCC director, warned that the decision could stifle competition as the industry moved towards full national choice next year.

Four of the largest independent suppliers, Beacon, Eastern, Calortex and ScottishPower, all vehemently opposed the price cuts. Evidence from Calortex claimed that, since the introduction of Value Plus,

numbers of homes switching from British Gas had dropped alarmingly.

The independent gas companies say British Gas could extend the price cuts to the newest trial area of Kent and Sussex, where competition is more fierce. In two months Centrica has lost about 20 per cent of its customers. Ms Spottiswoode has told rival suppliers her ruling on the South-west would not necessarily apply to the South-east.

Alan Lias, Beacon's managing director, said competition was not established yet. "These are still trial runs. The damage has already been done by British Gas in encouraging customers to believe if they stay with the company they will eventually get the same discounts. There's still tremendous inertia in the market."

P&O cruises into the new century with £200m round-the-world superliner



A new £200m superliner would enter the cruise market in the millennium, P&O Cruises announced yesterday. The 76,000-ton ship will be built at the Meyer Werft shipyard in Germany and will be delivered for service in the spring of 2000. The ship, which has yet to be named, will carry more than 1,800

passengers on world-wide cruises operating out of the UK. More than 400 cabins will have private balconies and 22 cabins will be designed for passengers with disabilities. Gwyn Hughes, managing director of P&O Cruises, said the superliner would move cruise ship design into the new century and set new

standards. The 886ft-long ship will join the *Orana*, the *Arcadia*, which enters service this year following the retirement of the *Canberra*, and the *Victoria* in the P&O fleet. Earlier this year P&O's subsidiary, Princess Cruises, announced plans to introduce a 77,000-ton liner in 1999, to be called *Ocean Princess*.

Betterware chairman defends £9.8m dividend

Magnus Grimon

Andrew Cohen, the executive chairman of Betterware, whose family effectively controls the catalogue retail group, yesterday defended a special £9.8m dividend being paid to benefit his family just days before the possible election of a Labour government. The company announced it planned to make a one-off payment of 9.31p a share to accompany a final dividend of 2.52p for the last financial year. News of the payment, which comes a year after Betterware paid its first special dividend of 2.6p a share, helped the shares rise 10p to 12.2p yesterday.

Mr Cohen, who with his family owns around 46 per cent of the group's shares, is not unknown to controversy. Shares in

the group crashed from 278p in 1993 to 38.5p in 1995 after the family raised £31m from the sale of part of their stake just months before Betterware was forced to issue a series of profit warnings and announced a slump in its annual results.

One City observer said of the latest move: "There is a problem in paying out a £9.8m dividend principally to yourself. You could say it's in the interest of all the shareholders, but it is in their interest to flush all of the cash into Mr Cohen's pockets just before a general election? I don't know."

Mr Cohen denied any selfish motives yesterday and said the decision to pay the dividend had nothing to do with the election, declaring himself "not a political animal".

The proposed special divi-

dend was being made for the benefit of all the shareholders, he said.

Referring to his family and his fellow directors, he said: "We kept 50 per cent of the equity all the way through. As far as we are concerned, the company is very cash-generative and we have no plans for this cash."

He said there would have been other complaints if the group had used the money, some £12.6m at the beginning of March, to buy in its shares, which might have raised earnings per share, boosting performance-linked executive bonuses, or increased the family's control.

The announcement came as Betterware announced a rise in pre-tax profits from £9.29m to £11.5m for the 12 months to 1 March.

IN BRIEF

Johnson gets £367,000 in compensation

Peter Johnson, the former Redland director who joined rival building materials company Rugby Group last April, received £367,500 in compensation following the termination of his contract, according to Redland's annual accounts. Mr Johnson was hired to Rugby last year when he was appointed group chief executive following the retirement of Peter Carr. The accounts also reveal that Robert Napier, Redland's chief executive, received a total salary package of £435,146 in 1996. Rudolph Agnew, appointed chairman in May, receives a basic salary of £150,000. The compensation and salary details reflect a year when Redland's pre-exceptional pre-tax profits fell by 27 per cent to £260m. The total dividend was held at 16.67p.

NovoPharm to market version of Zantac

Glaxo Wellcome has signed a licensing agreement to allow its rival NovoPharm to market a version of Zantac, Glaxo's ulcer treatment. NovoPharm would be able to market its treatment 16 days earlier than other manufacturers, a Glaxo spokesman said. In return, Glaxo will receive unspecified payments from NovoPharm. Glaxo is dropping plans to appeal against a court ruling which allowed NovoPharm to market its generic alternative to Zantac from mid-July. Glaxo shares dropped as low as 1.15p on the news before climbing back to 1.15p in early afternoon trade, down 9.5p on the day. In March it warned it faced two years after its patent on Zantac, its best-selling drug, expired in July.

Shire to distribute inflammatory drug

Shire Pharmaceuticals is to distribute Hoechst Marion Roussel's Calceort drug in the UK for 10 years from 1 May, with an optional five-year extension. Calceort treats inflammatory conditions such as asthma and rheumatoid arthritis without the side-effects on bones usually associated with oral corticosteroids. The drug is already prescribed in European countries.

Pre-tax profits double at Austin Reed

Austin Reed doubled pre-tax profits to £6.8m last year, on turnover up 7.5 per cent from £72.7m to £78.2m. Earnings per share climbed 7p to 14.2p. The company said retail businesses were the star turn of 1996, with turnover up 10 per cent, boosted by growth in its womenswear division. However, external manufacturing turnover fell from £13.7m to £13.5m, with operating profit falling £1.1m to £800,000. The company blamed slack demand in Europe and the increased strength of the pound. Colin Evans, chairman, said the company was continuing to reposition Austin Reed as the "modern British brand" and planned to increase its distribution of Austin Reed mens and womenswear in the UK this year.

Snakeboard unlikely to meet forecasts

Snakeboard International said it was "extremely unlikely" it would meet the forecasts contained in the company's AIM admission document. The company said that following the announcement made on 11 March about its trading position, trading performance in February and March had continued to be substantially below expectations. The company's first interim report and business review will be published during the week starting 19 May.

Company Results

| | Turnover £ | Pre-tax £ | EPS | Dividend |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Austin Reed (P) | 78.2m (72.7m) | 6.77m (3.99m) | 14.2p (7.2p) | 6.5p (8p) |
| Betterware (P) | 60.7m (54.0m) | 11.5m (2.29m) | 7.5p (5.3p) | 12.80p |
| Glaxo Wellcome (P) | 13.6m (11.4m) | 1.2m (1.01m) | 9.47p (7.8p) | 3.5p (2.4p) |
| NovoPharm (P) | 43.0m (42.4m) | 1.70m (1.53m) | 13.6p (14.1p) | 3p (2.5p) |
| Shire (P) | 448m (209m) | -0.84m (-0.72m) | - | - |
| Snakeboard (P) | 1020m (1030m) | 116.1m (115.0m) | 14.83p (10.59p) | 2.54p (2.25p) |
| Volvo Group (P) | 40.4m (46.1m) | 0.01m (4.75m) | 14.83p (10.59p) | 1.3p (2.44p) |
| Watershed Group (P) | 56.7m (11.4m) | 0.81m (-3.04m) | 0.41p (-4.19p) | 1.3p (1.3p) |
| ICI (P) | 2.4m (2.8m) | 70.0m (223m) | 4.7p (18.3p) | - |
| Novo (P) | 329m (387m) | 16.2m (10.3m) | 4.2p (2.97p) | 1p (0.5p) |
| Trinity (P) | 252m (208m) | 17.4m (18.0m) | 20.5p (20.5p) | 8.5p (8.3p) |
| United (P) | 83.2m (28.0m) | 3.05m (1.19m) | 5.99p (4.79p) | - |
| Wallington Underwriting (P) | - | 10.5m (2.22m) | 20.3p (8.8p) | 6.5p (5.5p) |

(P) = Profit (L) = Loss (U) = First quarter * special dividend of 9.51p also paid

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

ICI fails to beat the ups and downs of the chemical cycle

As it might, ICI cannot seem to escape the rack of the chemicals cycle. It has spent the 1990s trying to exit commodity businesses and launched two big cost-cutting and productivity initiatives in an attempt to provide some insulation from the vagaries of the market. Yet first-quarter figures announced yesterday were again hammered by a familiar combination of currency effects and collapsing prices.

Pre-tax profits crashed from £223m to just £70m in the three months to March. The group said the strong pound shaved £40m off the bottom line while its "best guess estimate" for the full-year impact has been raised £30m or so to £120m since February. The news sent analysts' red pencils through profit forecasts yesterday, cutting them in the region of £100m to around £480m.

The worst damage came in the division most exposed to the cycle. Industrial chemicals dived into a £13m loss from profits of £87m in the same period of 1996 and £143m the year before. The plunge is perhaps not surprising, given a 58 per cent fall in polyester prices and 22 per cent slump in oxide suffered up until earlier this year. It is ironic that volume growth in the upper teens for both chemicals has not been translated into better returns, but may augur for better times in the rest of the year, while prices are starting to move up again. If nothing else, the combination should provide a decent background for the flotation of the floride operation, pencilled in for late this year or early next.

Another disappointing area was the materials business, which sank from £61m to £24m. Profits in acrylics, the raw material used in some paints, plastic baths and similar products, held up well. However, the films and polyurethane businesses both wilted in the competitive heat and Asian over-capacity remains a problem.

Paint, which more than doubled its contribution to £30m, remains ICI's star operation. But Charles Miller Smith, the former Unilever manager who now sits in ICI's chief executive's chair, cannot rest his strategy of hiring the group closer to the consumer on this one division. Buying some

of the Unilever specialty chemicals operations recently put up for sale might help, but the group was keeping mum on that yesterday.

Yet ICI is too big and the pace of competition too relentless for it to escape the cycle completely. With £76m of savings achieved in these figures, it looks set to achieve the target of £400m benefits to the bottom line by the end of this year. But much of those will have to be given away to customers unless its rivals cut prices more aggressively. So, even with the improving outlook, the shares at 700.5p, down 20p, look fully valued on a forward p/e of 19.

Retail group still fragile

Betterware's management has worked hard to restore the catalogue retailing group's fragile reputation since 1993 when sentiment was hammered by ill-timed share sales by the controlling Cohen family. The shares have bounced from the low of 38.5p just two years ago, but even after a 7.5p rise to 119.5p yesterday, the recovery seems to have petered out over the past 12 months.

There is clearly plenty for the City to remain nervous about. The reputation of Andrew Cohen, chief executive, took a knock after the share sales. With 46 per cent

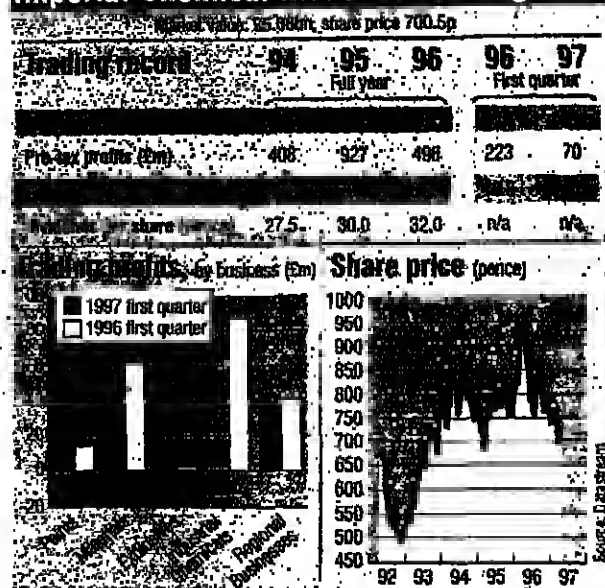
of the shares, his family is again set to be the chief beneficiary of the £9.8m to be paid out under the new special dividend proposals announced yesterday. Even coming so close to the possible election of a Labour government, Mr Cohen probably deserves the benefit of the doubt, given that the possibility of a special payment was mooted six months ago.

More pertinent is the underlying trading picture at Betterware, which yesterday reported a 24 per cent jump in pre-tax profits to £11.5m for the year to 1 March. The figures are complicated by losses in the previous year on the former plastic moulding business and another VAT repayment, which garnered £1.25m in 1996/97.

But at the sales level, the company insists a slowdown in second-half growth in the UK from 16 per cent in the previous period to just 7 per cent last year is not to be taken as evidence of a maturing market. It remains confident it can achieve "high single-figure" growth over the next few years.

Even so, the real excitement must come from abroad. Europe could chip in £1m to profits this year, while the Latin American joint venture with Avon, which moves into Brazil next month, could be contributing at least that much by 1998/99. Flat profits of £11.5m in the current year would put the shares on a forward p/e of 16. High enough.

Imperial Chemical Industries: At a glance



Trinity untroubled by strong pound

Trinity Holdings, the specialist maker and exporter of buses, fire engines, dust carts and the like, says it has yet to be hit by the strength of sterling, despite 43 per cent of its sales going abroad. Exports soared 38 per cent in the year, helping total turnover to rise 26 per cent to £262m.

The rather slower growth in profit, up just 9 per cent to £17.4m, was blamed more on temporary difficulties within export markets themselves. Those affected bus body kit maker Duple Metsec and UMW-Dennis, the joint venture company in Malaysia. After allowing for the new shares issued to fund the acquisition of Douglas & Schopt in January last year, earnings per share were static at 20.0p.

But cash flow remains strong - the company had £8.2m in the bank at the end of the year - and the current order book is also at record levels. Trinity is market leader in the UK bus, fire engine and refuse-collection markets and after combining Douglas & Schopt with Re-

liance Mercury, has now added leadership in airport and dock-handling equipment.

Although capacity at Dennis Specialist Vehicles was increased by 30 per cent in 1995, demand for buses and coaches was so strong that a further increase in assembly facilities is needed this year. DSV has 41 per cent of the bus market and 15 per cent of the coach market in the UK.

Growth in the domestic coach market levelled off last year, but £70m worth of orders from Hong Kong provides a sizeable cushion. Cuts in fire service budgets reduced demand 30 per cent below normal levels last year, although there are signs of a recovery in 1997.

The shares fell 3.5p to 315p, putting them on a forward p/e of 14, if profit forecasts of £19.5m for this year are borne out. The continuing strength of sterling is the main obvious threat, but assuming it eases the shares still look good value.

Branson attacks BA's control of Terminal 5

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

The tussle for Terminal 5 went public yesterday after Richard Branson, chairman of Virgin Atlantic Airways, attacked the decision to hand over the proposed £1.2bn development at Heathrow Airport to British Airways.

BAA, which runs Heathrow, ruled that Terminal 5 - which is the subject of a marathon public inquiry - would be used solely by BA and its alliance partners if and when it was built.

Mr Branson, who is leading the fight to stop BA's plans to link up with American Airlines, the carrier with the largest turnover in the world, said the move would give BA an unfair advantage over other airlines. "One has to ask whether this is a fair opportunity for customers to give a brand, spanking new facility to a monopolistic airline when all the carriers are paying for it," said Mr Branson, who

intends to take the matter up with the Office for Fair Trading and the European Commission. BAA says that its annual £1.6bn revenue stream comes from three principal sources. More than £500m of the company's cash flow is from its vast retail operations, another £434m comes from charging airlines landing fees and more than £200m is garnered from BAA's property portfolio.

Mr Branson's plea is also not an argument that BA accepts. Bob Ayling, BA's chief executive, said it had long been the airline's dream to offer customers "all of our services under one roof". "Today this dream moves one important step closer to reality," he said.

The company pointed out that it was also suffering from Heathrow's overcrowding. Recently, BA has moved its Latin American and Central African flights to Gatwick to free up slots at Heathrow. The deal is conditional on BA

leaving Heathrow's Terminal 1. Seen as a sop by other airlines, BAA is looking to hand over Terminal 1 to a mega-alliance of carriers including United, Lufthansa, SAS, Air Canada and Thai.

BAA's chief executive, Sir John Egan, said that BA's move was a key step in planning the Terminal 5 project. BAA said it would now discuss with other airlines just who should go where at the airport.

But Mr Branson said that BAA first floated the idea that BA might control Terminal 5 earlier this year. "When BAA told us that BA would have Terminal 5, we said that it was unacceptable without proper negotiations."

While all airlines and big business support Terminal 5, green groups and local councils oppose it. The public inquiry has run for nearly two years and will last for another 12 months. If planning permission is granted Terminal 5 could open in 2004.

Brent Walker debates future of William Hill

Clifford German

Brent Walker, the debt-laden leisure group, is still considering whether to sell its William Hill betting business after reporting a group profit of £50.6m before tax and interest charges in 1996 compared with a loss of £414.5m the previous year.

William Hill has 1,700 betting shops and could be worth £500m. Its turnover rose 6.2 per cent last year while profits rose by 30 per cent to £50.6m. Trading since the beginning of the current year had been encouraging. Sir Brian Gosnell, chairman, said yesterday. The introduction of fruit machines and numbers betting had made a significant contribution but the betting services industry remained volatile, he said.

The options open to Brent Walker include floating William Hill on the market, reversing it into a shell company, finding a merger partner or looking for a trade sale. Bass, the brewer and hotels group that owns the Coral chain with 930 betting shops in the UK, is widely regarded as a potential buyer.

Group turnover at Brent

Walker rose by 4 per cent to £1.73bn last year, on which the company made a profit of £116.5m before interest and tax. The results were helped by the sale of its Pubmaster chain of public houses for £171m last November and by setting the dispute over the value of the William Hill betting business it bought from Grand Metropolitan, the giant food and drinks group, in 1989.

Brent Walker received a net payment of £36m from the settlement with Grand Met. However, the dispute with Brent Walker's former chairman, George Walker, over the sale of its French vineyard in 1989 cost the group £3.28m.

Brent Walker still has debts of £1.5bn and interest charges cost £165.9m last year. The company's loan agreements with its bankers run out at the end of this year and the company must sell its remaining assets or renegotiate its debts. If it decides to retain William Hill, this would require the banks agreeing to extend the current facilities, Sir Brian said. The shares rose 0.75p yesterday to 2p.

£50m to fix computers, says Abbey

The "millennium issue" could cost Abbey National more than £50m in adapting the group's computers and other technical systems, Ian Harley, finance director and the executive director in charge of information technology for the group, told the annual general meeting yesterday. "It could well cost more than that if it put together with the issue of converting for the euro."

Lord Tugendhat, chairman, said he was very much in favour of Britain playing a part in a single European currency. "The volatility of sterling is much greater than other European currencies."

Abbey National's share of the increase in UK net mortgage business has improved since the last quarter of 1996 but remains below its 14.7 per cent share of the market.

Lord Tugendhat said money continued to be tied up in the converting building societies, and Abbey's share of retail savings flows had been well below stock levels, but the underlying performance was better than last year.

He said Abbey National was now selling general insurance to all customers rather than just mortgage customers.

Risk Of Thunder produces electricity

Racing

GREG WOOD reports from Punchestown

It is easy enough to set a racecourse crowd cheering, but it takes something special to make them catch their breath. Yet that, and the thump of hooves, was the only sound as Risk Of Thunder jumped the big double bank in the La Touche Cup here yesterday, a stunned mark of respect for perhaps the finest display of athleticism any racecourse will see this year.

The La Touche is one of those cross-country oddities, part steeplechase and part obstacle course, which requires its runners to scurry and twist their way across stone walls, stout hedges and, above all, the Punchestown bank, great mounds with deep ditch on either side. On an ordinary park course, Risk Of Thunder is, as his trainer and jockey, Enda Bol-

ger, freely admits, "very, very ordinary" but send him over the banks and he is all but unbeatable. Yesterday he won his third straight La Touche, quite an achievement for an eight-year-old, and the manner of his victory was magnificent to behold.

A big crowd had gathered by the double bank, which the field jumps twice, once in either direction, as the La Touche plots its erratic course across the countryside. They were drawn by the rare opportunity to watch

steeplechasers tackling a difficult obstacle at high speed, and Risk Of Thunder did not disappoint.

Second time around, with three miles of toil already behind him, he leapt on to the bank and then off the other side so swiftly and elegantly that if it had been covered with Plasticine, he would not have left a footprint. It was over in a second, but few were there to witness it. Certainly not Bolger, who has been riding the bank course at Punchestown for 15 years.

"I've never been on a horse like him around here," said Bolger. "He's so fast and electric, he went over the bank the second time just like it wasn't there. He's a three-stone better horse than he is anywhere else."

Anywhere else, that is, except another cross-country course, and such was Risk Of Thunder's authority yesterday that there is only one obvious target for him this year, the Veika Fardabicka (the Czech Grand National). "We'll now prepare him just for

that," Bolger said. "There's good money, about £30,000, for the winner, and Richard Dunwoody and Norman Williamson have both been there and they tell me he's the perfect horse for the job."

Risk Of Thunder ran in the colours of Sean Connery, who visited Punchestown on La Touche just 12 months ago and enjoyed it so much that he decided to buy the winner. Also involved in the purchase, as he is with so much on the Irish turf,

was J P McManus, who greeted a winner in his own silks when Grimes took the Murphy's Champion Four-Year-Old Hurdle. Grimes was backed from 5-1 to 5-2, and McManus, whose money was surely responsible, was never in much danger of leaving the cash behind.

Quaker's Field, a winner at Aintree, was a deeply disappointing British-trained favourite for the race, but the visitors enjoyed better fortune in the Champion Stayers' Hurdle. Paddy's Return, trained by Feryd Murphy, beat David Nicholson's Escartefigue, his first success since the 1995 Triumph Hurdle.

The day, though, belonged to Risk Of Thunder, and the man who rode him unwittingly surprised just both the mood and the fumes of racegoers after three exhilarating days at Punchestown. "He just loves it here," Bolger said, "he's always looking for a bank."

SANDOWN

2.05: The contenders that have run look quite ordinary so DAUNTING LADY, from a stable that has its just claim to fame and who has the best of the draw, is the pick.

2.35: LATALOWNE was a big impression when winning on his Nottingham debut, but five of the seven runners won last time out. Military is held in high regard, and there is much potential in the field.

ASCOT

5.30: GARRKLOUGH disappointed when unable to dominate last time and is worth another chance.

6.00: DAKSHAN remains well handicapped despite winning last two starts and can hold the back-to-form Vix A Dreamer.

6.30: BOOTS N ALL was well at Cheltenham and can follow up.

SANDOWN-3.10

| Rank | Time | Weight | Age | Sex | Colour | Trainer | Jockey |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1.00 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 2 | 1.05 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 3 | 1.10 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 4 | 1.15 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 5 | 1.20 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 6 | 1.25 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 7 | 1.30 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 8 | 1.35 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 9 | 1.40 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 10 | 1.45 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |

C-Club, N-Nottingham, T-Town, W-Wellington, Y-York

HYPERION

2.05: Daring Lady 4.10 Pomona 2.35 Latalowne (nb) 3.10 Bin Rosie (nb) 3.40 Soofama

GOING: Good to Firm (Good in places). STALLS: Inside. DRAW ADVANTAGE: High for 5th, low for 7th & 11th. RACE: A very good race, with a strong field. Daring Lady is the favourite, but Latalowne is a big chance. Bin Rosie and Soofama are also in the mix.

2.05: ALBERT MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,000 20 fms 5f Penalty Value £3,566

| Rank | Time | Weight | Age | Sex | Colour | Trainer | Jockey |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1.00 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 2 | 1.05 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 3 | 1.10 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 4 | 1.15 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 5 | 1.20 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 6 | 1.25 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 7 | 1.30 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 8 | 1.35 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 9 | 1.40 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 10 | 1.45 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |

2.35: TUOR CONDITIONS STAKES (CLASS C) £8,000 added 370 1m Penalty Value £4,895

| Rank | Time | Weight | Age | Sex | Colour | Trainer | Jockey |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1.00 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 2 | 1.05 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 3 | 1.10 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 4 | 1.15 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 5 | 1.20 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 6 | 1.25 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 7 | 1.30 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 8 | 1.35 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 9 | 1.40 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 10 | 1.45 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |

HYPERION

2.05: Daring Lady 4.10 Pomona 2.35 Latalowne (nb) 3.10 Bin Rosie (nb) 3.40 Soofama

GOING: Good to Firm (Good in places). STALLS: Inside. DRAW ADVANTAGE: High for 5th, low for 7th & 11th. RACE: A very good race, with a strong field. Daring Lady is the favourite, but Latalowne is a big chance. Bin Rosie and Soofama are also in the mix.

2.05: ALBERT MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,000 20 fms 5f Penalty Value £3,566

| Rank | Time | Weight | Age | Sex | Colour | Trainer | Jockey |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1.00 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 2 | 1.05 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 3 | 1.10 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 4 | 1.15 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 5 | 1.20 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 6 | 1.25 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 7 | 1.30 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 8 | 1.35 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 9 | 1.40 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 10 | 1.45 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |

2.35: TUOR CONDITIONS STAKES (CLASS C) £8,000 added 370 1m Penalty Value £4,895

| Rank | Time | Weight | Age | Sex | Colour | Trainer | Jockey |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1.00 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 2 | 1.05 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 3 | 1.10 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 4 | 1.15 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 5 | 1.20 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 6 | 1.25 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 7 | 1.30 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 8 | 1.35 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 9 | 1.40 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 10 | 1.45 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |

HYPERION

2.05: Daring Lady 4.10 Pomona 2.35 Latalowne (nb) 3.10 Bin Rosie (nb) 3.40 Soofama

GOING: Good to Firm (Good in places). STALLS: Inside. DRAW ADVANTAGE: High for 5th, low for 7th & 11th. RACE: A very good race, with a strong field. Daring Lady is the favourite, but Latalowne is a big chance. Bin Rosie and Soofama are also in the mix.

2.05: ALBERT MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,000 20 fms 5f Penalty Value £3,566

| Rank | Time | Weight | Age | Sex | Colour | Trainer | Jockey |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1.00 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 2 | 1.05 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 3 | 1.10 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 4 | 1.15 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 5 | 1.20 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 6 | 1.25 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 7 | 1.30 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 8 | 1.35 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 9 | 1.40 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 10 | 1.45 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |

2.35: TUOR CONDITIONS STAKES (CLASS C) £8,000 added 370 1m Penalty Value £4,895

| Rank | Time | Weight | Age | Sex | Colour | Trainer | Jockey |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1.00 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 2 | 1.05 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 3 | 1.10 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 4 | 1.15 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 5 | 1.20 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 6 | 1.25 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 7 | 1.30 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 8 | 1.35 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 9 | 1.40 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 10 | 1.45 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |

HYPERION

2.05: Daring Lady 4.10 Pomona 2.35 Latalowne (nb) 3.10 Bin Rosie (nb) 3.40 Soofama

GOING: Good to Firm (Good in places). STALLS: Inside. DRAW ADVANTAGE: High for 5th, low for 7th & 11th. RACE: A very good race, with a strong field. Daring Lady is the favourite, but Latalowne is a big chance. Bin Rosie and Soofama are also in the mix.

2.05: ALBERT MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,000 20 fms 5f Penalty Value £3,566

| Rank | Time | Weight | Age | Sex | Colour | Trainer | Jockey |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1.00 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 2 | 1.05 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 3 | 1.10 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 4 | 1.15 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 5 | 1.20 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 6 | 1.25 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 7 | 1.30 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 8 | 1.35 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 9 | 1.40 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 10 | 1.45 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |

2.35: TUOR CONDITIONS STAKES (CLASS C) £8,000 added 370 1m Penalty Value £4,895

| Rank | Time | Weight | Age | Sex | Colour | Trainer | Jockey |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1.00 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 2 | 1.05 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 3 | 1.10 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 4 | 1.15 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 5 | 1.20 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 6 | 1.25 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 7 | 1.30 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 8 | 1.35 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 9 | 1.40 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 10 | 1.45 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |

HYPERION

2.05: Daring Lady 4.10 Pomona 2.35 Latalowne (nb) 3.10 Bin Rosie (nb) 3.40 Soofama

GOING: Good to Firm (Good in places). STALLS: Inside. DRAW ADVANTAGE: High for 5th, low for 7th & 11th. RACE: A very good race, with a strong field. Daring Lady is the favourite, but Latalowne is a big chance. Bin Rosie and Soofama are also in the mix.

2.05: ALBERT MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,000 20 fms 5f Penalty Value £3,566

| Rank | Time | Weight | Age | Sex | Colour | Trainer | Jockey |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1.00 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 2 | 1.05 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 3 | 1.10 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 4 | 1.15 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 5 | 1.20 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 6 | 1.25 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 7 | 1.30 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 8 | 1.35 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 9 | 1.40 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 10 | 1.45 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |

2.35: TUOR CONDITIONS STAKES (CLASS C) £8,000 added 370 1m Penalty Value £4,895

| Rank | Time | Weight | Age | Sex | Colour | Trainer | Jockey |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1.00 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 2 | 1.05 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 3 | 1.10 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 4 | 1.15 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 5 | 1.20 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 6 | 1.25 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 7 | 1.30 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 8 | 1.35 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 9 | 1.40 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 10 | 1.45 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |

HYPERION

2.20: Timekeeper 2.55 High Premium 3.25 Smarter Charter 4.00 Polyphory 4.30 Count Roy 5.05 Grey Kingdom

GOING: Good to Firm (Good in places). STALLS: Inside. DRAW ADVANTAGE: High for 7th to 11th. RACE: A very good race, with a strong field. Timekeeper is the favourite, but High Premium is a big chance. Smarter Charter and Polyphory are also in the mix.

2.20: TALBOTS MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £4,500 added 270 5f

| Rank | Time | Weight | Age | Sex | Colour | Trainer | Jockey |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1.00 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |
| 2 | 1.05 | 11.5 | 3 | M | B | W. J. Moore | W. J. Moore |

sport

Villeneuve backs return to 'real racetracks'

Motor racing

DERICK ALLSOP
reports from Imola

Springtime in Emilia Romagna: trees in blossom, a gentle sun caressing the hillside vineyards and the promise of the nation's finest pasta. For some, a definition of heaven.

For the Formula One fraternity, however, this corner of Italy will forever rekindle a vision of hell, and the adjournment of the Ayrton Senna trial, just down the road from the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari, cannot deflect from the conscience of the horrors of the San Marino Grand Prix three years ago. Another consequence is a circuit neutralised by a chicane at the point where the Brazilian was killed, and a backlash from drivers demanding a return to "real racetracks."

Chief among them is Jacques Villeneuve, the world championship leader, and a man ever intent on saying what he thinks. Right now he thinks and says this circuit is boring, which is his impression of many circuits.

Furthermore, he reiterated here yesterday, that he thinks Formula One racing is becoming boring to the extent that he and others will seek fun, if not fortunes, in IndyCars.

The Canadian claims he speaks for others, as well as himself, when he denounced rule changes scheduled for next year, which include the introduction of narrower cars and grooved tyres, intended to bring down lap times and improve racing. Fewer and fewer, apparently, now have faith in that theory.

Villeneuve said: "The changes will only help the big teams with money to open the gap between themselves and the others. If it becomes boring to drive then the pinnacle could be IndyCars. The money will not be enough to keep me here for long. Other drivers, too, have said they are looking at the other side."

The Williams-Renault driver is perceived by some as a moaner, in which case he will be in good company while he remains to Formula One. Giancarlo Fisichella, a new boy at Jordan-Peugeot this season, made it plain yesterday he had no time for his team-mate, another new boy, Ralf Schumacher, after their dust-up in Argentina, where the German barged the Italian out of his way en route to third place.

Eddie Jordan, the team owner, has given the pair a lecture for the incident, but Fisichella said: "Our friendship is finished. I will always be correct on the track, and we'll work together on the car. But away from the track there will be nothing. We are not together."

Jordan may face the first test of his "team discipline" in Sunday's San Marino Grand Prix, when Fisichella's knowledge of the circuit may give him the edge over the ultra-combative Schumacher. Eddie Irvine would like to think he will discover on Sunday if the authorities are prepared to meet his request for a flag depicting a shamrock to be displayed on the podium in his honour. Better still, if they are prepared to play the non-sectarian Loundonderry Air to mark his victory. The Ulsterman stood beneath the Irish tricolour after taking second place in Buenos Aires and, as a result, his parents received threatening phone calls.

Irvine, who lives in the Republic and is licensed as a racing driver there, wants to avoid any implied commitment to either the tricolour or the Union flag, suggesting the shamrock symbol would be a politically and socially acceptable compromise.

He said: "It can be a help being Irish and British, and this has not caused me problems, but it has for my father and mother back home, and people who work for me. Politics should be kept out of sport."

After coaching Tiger Woods to become the youngest and most comprehensive Masters champion ever, Butch Harmon did not have to look far for an encore. The man obviously likes a challenge. For his next trick, Seve Ballesteros may make his first cut this year.

Four under after 11 holes, Ballesteros could have done even better than his 70 in the first round of the Peugeot Spanish Open. He is four behind Germany's Alex Cejka and the defending champion, Padraig Harrington, who has managed to bring the form from his maiden win as a rookie at Club de Campo a year ago to the tournament's new venue at La Moraleja II.

Ballesteros finished third here in the Old pro-am last October, an event won by his American counterpart as Ryder Cup captain, Tom Kite. But this year, the Spaniard's playing ration has been strictly limited to two days at a time. If that changes this weekend, it will have been built on the security of birdies at three of his first four holes yesterday.

It meant that a loss of concentration on the back nine was not disastrous. He left his recovery shot in a bunker at the short 13th and took three putts on the next. At 15, his eagle pitch tipped out, the birdie a formality, but a wild tee shot at the 17th cost another shot. Overall, Ballesteros was encouraged. "It is my best score and the best I have played this year," he said.

"I believe I played better than a 70, but the last six holes were a bit unsteady. I have been working with Butch at the Masters, at Santander last week and again here and I am very positive that things will change. I have won in the 70s, the 80s, the 90s and I will still be winning in 2000."

Strangely, Ballesteros denied that the world No 2, Greg Norman, was here because the Spaniard had agreed to play in Norman's tournament in Australia. "My manager Roddy Carr made the deal with Greg. Maybe Roddy will play in Australia," Seve said.

Norman shot a three-under 69, the same as his playing partner, Jose Maria Olazabal, who received Spain's highest sporting honour, the Gold Medal, on Monday night. On Wednesday, Norman had a bull dedicated to him at a bullfight but he declined the invitation to have a go himself. "I admire the courage of the matadors," the Spaniard said. "I wouldn't want to be in there doing that."

Cejka, who came home in 30, and Harrington, who made six birdies in eight holes from the fourth, led by one on 66 from club pro Gary Emerson and Mark James. The Ryder Cup veteran is another emerging from a spell where the only things wrong with his game were that he "putted poorly, thought poorly, swung poorly, had some bad luck and my chipping and sand play was not too good."

Fuzzy Zoeller has withdrawn from the Greater Greensboro tournament saying he could not continue playing competitively until he had apologised personally to Tiger Woods for racially insensitive remarks he made about the Masters champion.

Seve set to make first cut of year

Golf

ANDY FARRELL
reports from Madrid

After coaching Tiger Woods to become the youngest and most comprehensive Masters champion ever, Butch Harmon did not have to look far for an encore. The man obviously likes a challenge. For his next trick, Seve Ballesteros may make his first cut this year.

Four under after 11 holes, Ballesteros could have done even better than his 70 in the first round of the Peugeot Spanish Open. He is four behind Germany's Alex Cejka and the defending champion, Padraig Harrington, who has managed to bring the form from his maiden win as a rookie at Club de Campo a year ago to the tournament's new venue at La Moraleja II.

Ballesteros finished third here in the Old pro-am last October, an event won by his American counterpart as Ryder Cup captain, Tom Kite. But this year, the Spaniard's playing ration has been strictly limited to two days at a time. If that changes this weekend, it will have been built on the security of birdies at three of his first four holes yesterday.

It meant that a loss of concentration on the back nine was not disastrous. He left his recovery shot in a bunker at the short 13th and took three putts on the next. At 15, his eagle pitch tipped out, the birdie a formality, but a wild tee shot at the 17th cost another shot. Overall, Ballesteros was encouraged. "It is my best score and the best I have played this year," he said.

"I believe I played better than a 70, but the last six holes were a bit unsteady. I have been working with Butch at the Masters, at Santander last week and again here and I am very positive that things will change. I have won in the 70s, the 80s, the 90s and I will still be winning in 2000."

Strangely, Ballesteros denied that the world No 2, Greg Norman, was here because the Spaniard had agreed to play in Norman's tournament in Australia. "My manager Roddy Carr made the deal with Greg. Maybe Roddy will play in Australia," Seve said.

Norman shot a three-under 69, the same as his playing partner, Jose Maria Olazabal, who received Spain's highest sporting honour, the Gold Medal, on Monday night. On Wednesday, Norman had a bull dedicated to him at a bullfight but he declined the invitation to have a go himself. "I admire the courage of the matadors," the Spaniard said. "I wouldn't want to be in there doing that."

Cejka, who came home in 30, and Harrington, who made six birdies in eight holes from the fourth, led by one on 66 from club pro Gary Emerson and Mark James. The Ryder Cup veteran is another emerging from a spell where the only things wrong with his game were that he "putted poorly, thought poorly, swung poorly, had some bad luck and my chipping and sand play was not too good."

Fuzzy Zoeller has withdrawn from the Greater Greensboro tournament saying he could not continue playing competitively until he had apologised personally to Tiger Woods for racially insensitive remarks he made about the Masters champion.

Courier thrown out of Monte Carlo Open

Tennis

Jim Courier was disqualified from his doubles match at the Monte Carlo Open yesterday and will lose all his prize-money from the tournament.

Courier, twice a French and Australian Open champion, and his partner, Marc Rosset of Switzerland, were 4-1 down in the third set of their second-round match against the Argentinian Luis Lobo and Javier Sanchez of Spain, having taken the first set 6-3 but lost the second 6-2.

Courier was warned for an audible obscenity. He repeated it and the team lost a point. He then kicked the umpire's chair, constituting a third offence of unsportsmanlike conduct. His fine will be about £15,000.

Tim Henman is confident of being fit enough to return to action at the Italian Open, which starts on 12 May. Henman was forced to miss Britain's recent Davis Cup defeat by Zimbabwe because of an elbow injury.

Martina Hingis, the women's world No 1, left hospital yesterday after a 30-minute operation on Wednesday to repair the knee ligament she injured in a fall from a horse. She will be unable to resume full training for three weeks.

The end of King Eric's reign is nigh

Glenn Moore on Manchester United's exit from Europe and its consequences

The verdict on Manchester United's tilt at European glory could be read in the stands on Wednesday night. In the closing moments of their 1-0 defeat by Borussia Dortmund, when it became obvious that they would not overturn the 2-0 aggregate deficit, United's followers passed judgement.

They had been deathly quiet for 20 minutes as chances came and went to the accompaniment of German drums. Now, as the dream of a place in the European Cup final disappeared, they stood, not to head for the exits, but to acclaim their team, and their conquerors.

Dortmund deserved the applause for their resilience and their opportunism. United deserved it for their efforts on the night and across the season. They had given Old Trafford more than they dared hope for in the autumn, after the trouncing in Turin and two humbling defeats at home.

The fans' view was reflected within the club. After the failings of recent years, simply reaching the semi-finals was an achievement. United will recognise that, for all Alex Ferguson's public protestations, they were not good enough to go further. They have been beaten five times to the competition, including

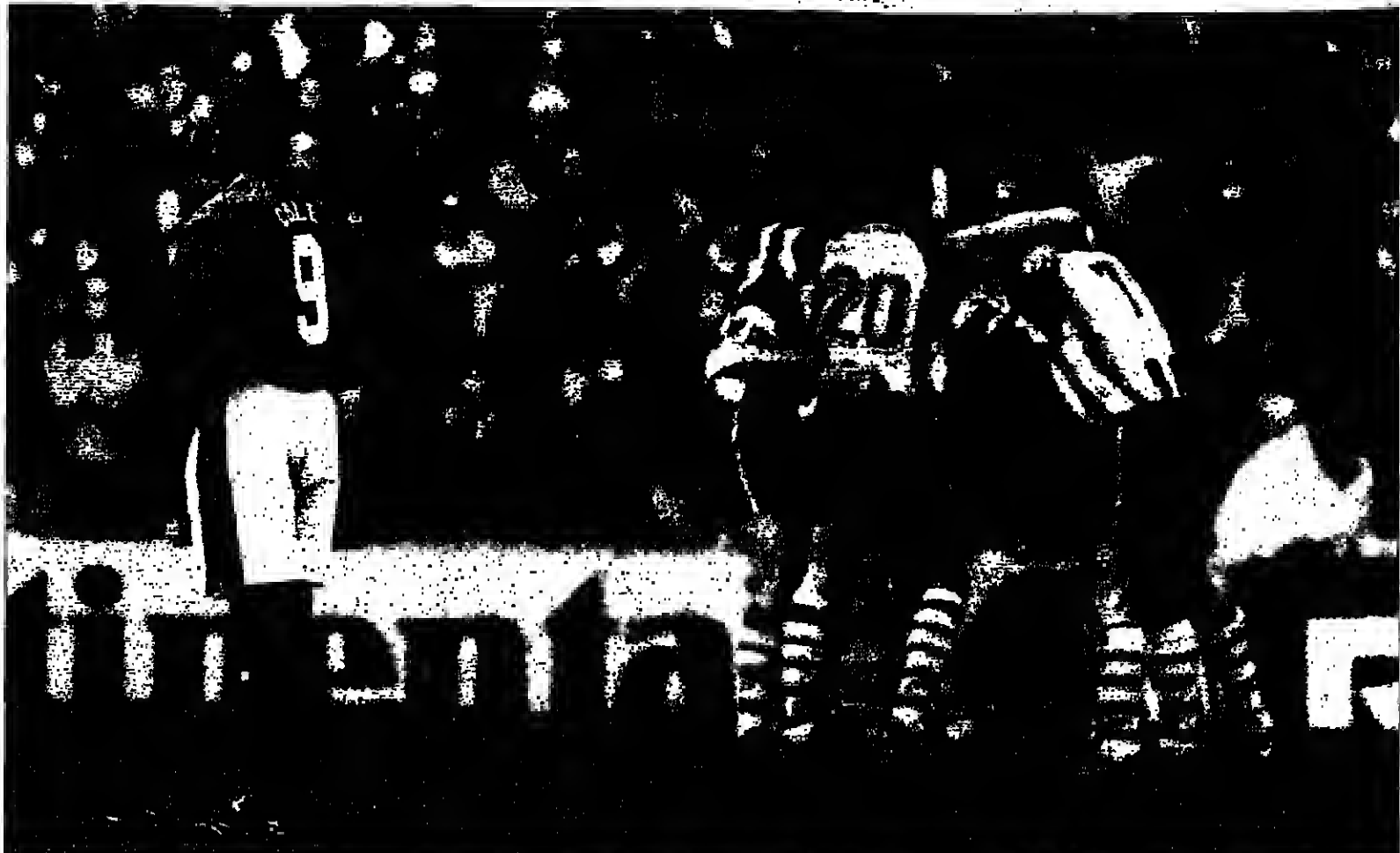
home and away by Dortmund and Juventus.

They are, however, good enough to compete with the best and are learning all the time. Some judicious summer investment and, next season, they could go that one step further.

The question exercising Alex Ferguson's mind this morning is where to improve and who to buy? When you are as good as United the number of players that can improve the team without disrupting the dressing-room and pay structure are rare.

It can be done. "Juventus was the Champions' League last year and they sold and bought," Ferguson said yesterday. They sold Fabrizio Ravanelli, Gianluca Vialli, Paulo Sousa and Pietro Vierchow among others. The players they brought in included Alan Boksic and Zinedine Zidane and the result is better than the original. It will be a surprise if Juventus do not retain their trophy in Munich on 28 May.

Karel Poborsky has been a disappointment, and United still need a wide right player to provide further options, including allowing David Beckham to play inside more often; they may need a defender to replace the injury-prone Gary



Andy Cole watches as Borussia Dortmund's players celebrate their goal at Old Trafford on Wednesday night

Photograph: David Ashdown

Pallister, and, most cootiously, they need a new striker or two. Andy Cole played well on Wednesday but his finishing continues to let him down. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has had a good season but is light weight and still learning; Eric Cantona looked like a man whose time has passed.

Once again he failed to deliver when it mattered and, for the first time, there were stirrings of dissent among his followers. He has had a peripheral impact this season; he missed crucial chances in both legs against Dortmund and United

have played well without him, notably at Arsenal.

Possibilities are few. Davor Suker is regularly mentioned but one wonders how he would fit in the dressing-room, and he would not be a replacement for Cantona. No doubt Ferguson will soon be headed for Ringway Airport but one answer could be close to home. If Middlesbrough fail to survive, Juhanho may be looking for new employment.

United will need to be better next season as it will be harder to qualify. There are six groups of four and, as England are currently seventh in the rankings,

United might not be among the top seeds. With second-placed clubs also involved they could find themselves in a group with Juventus and Barcelona. Only the group winner qualifies automatically, the best two second-placed clubs joining them in the quarter-finals.

The competition begins early, far too early, on 23 July – the day before the fourth cricket test. That round involves the champions of the minor nations, which will probably include Rangers.

This format may only last a season as Uefa, the governing

body of European football, acting on a proposal from Juventus, are planning further reform of their lucrative flagship. They are considering dispensing with two-legged semi-finals and playing a mini-tournament in late May with both semi-finals and the final played within a week in one country.

Brilliant, one might think. This would reduce fixture congestion by freeing two midweeks in April. However, anyone leaping to that conclusion has not studied Uefa's empire-building. The two extra midweeks would merely allow

the format to become four groups of six. It will simplify the process but the consequence would be more matches, not fewer. Annual income, already outstripping the World Cup finals at more than £100m, will also go up.

At least this year's late-May fixture bottleneck has been eased. Wednesday night's defeat means United's growing coterie of England players should now be (relatively) fresh for the 31 May World Cup tie in Poland and available for the warm-up match with South Africa at Old Trafford on 24 May.

Graham chasing Fiorentina's Amoruso

ALAN NIXON

George Graham, the Leeds United manager, was in Florence last night watching Fiorentina's European Cup-Winners' Cup semi-final second leg against Barcelona and trying to sign the Italian club's £3m-rated central defender Lorenzo Amoruso.

Amoruso has played an integral part in the Italian club's European campaign and is rated one of the best uncapped defenders in Italy. He is reportedly interested in a move to England.

Graham plans to spend around £10m on new faces with five or six players joining his squad in the close season.

Graham has also made moves for Bolton's £3.2m-rated Alan Thompson, the Brentford striker

Carl Asaba, the Israeli forward Heim Revivo and the Rangers left-back David Robertson.

The Burnley manager, Adrian Heath, wants to sign the experienced midfielder Barry Horne from Birmingham as part of a swap for goalkeeper Marlon Beresford. The Welsh international has been told he can go by the Birmingham manager, Trevor Francis, who is in-

terested in Beresford with his current No 1 Ian Bennett stalling on signing a new deal.

The Portsmouth chairman, Terry Venables, who now owns a controlling interest in the club, will reveal plans for a new stadium for the First Division club today. The club hope to build a new home on a site yet to be decided, although a railway goods yard adjacent to

Fratton Park is the most likely option. Portsmouth will get £2m from the Football Trust if they can begin building before the end of this season.

Cesare Maldini yesterday added Roberto Baggio to the squad for Italy's home World Cup qualifier against Poland on Wednesday. Baggio, 30, who has 45 caps, last played for Italy in September 1995.

Falkirk were relegated from the Premier Division last year but Waddie is hoping a cup final victory will provide the impetus for a successful promotion campaign next season.

"For a club of their size they're ambitious, they've got plans for a new stadium and this [reaching the final] has come at a good time for them," Waddie added. "They've got a lot of experienced players and I believe they're good enough to play in the Premier Division."

"If they win the cup that might give them the push they need to go on and get promotion next season."

Altrincham on the edge of precipice

Non-League notebook
RUPERT METCALF

While Macclesfield Town prepare for the last push towards promotion to the Football League, their Cheshire rivals Altrincham can only look on in envy for the Moss Lane club are on the brink of relegation from the GM Vauxhall Conference.

Altrincham were founder members of the Conference (then called the Alliance Premier League) in 1979 and have not been relegated since then. They won the first two titles in 1980 and '81, and in the era before promotion and relegation, were desperately unlucky not to be voted in to the Football League.

Altrincham's manager, John King, and his assistant, Graham Heathcote, were both members of the team in those glory years, so they are suffering more than most people at the club who that the cheers have turned to tears. At the start of 1997 Altrincham were in what

seemed a comfortable mid-table position. But their form since then has been dreadful. They have not won for 15 games and are now bottom of the table, with just three games left to play.

After last weekend's 2-1 home defeat to Dover, who scored twice in the last seven minutes to seize the points, King said that all his players were "so down, so heartbroken". They will not be feeling much better if they lose to Kettering at Moss Lane tomorrow – such a result would confirm relegation if Welling get at least a point at home to Gateshead and/or Bath win at Hayes.

Bromsgrove Rovers will also be relegated if they lose at Macclesfield, who will secure the title if they win tomorrow and on Wednesday at Havant in their penultimate fixture. Sammy McIlroy's side beat Woking 5-0 at Moss Rose on Tuesday, scoring four goals in four second-half minutes, to put promotion within their grasp.

Burns stands firm despite Falkirk embarrassment

Scottish football

The Celtic manager, Tommy Burns, was in a defiant mood yesterday, insisting he would not quit Parkhead after his side's shock Scottish Cup exit against Falkirk at Ibrox on Wednesday night.

Burns' future was immediately the subject of speculation after their 1-0 semi-final replay defeat at the end of a season which will almost certainly see rivals Rangers collect their ninth championship in a row.

Burns said: "I will not be resigning. I can either walk away or stay and try and change it. I

would be the first to admit I have made mistakes in the first three years I have been here but I also feel I have learned an enormous amount in that time and I intend to use that experience to the full in the future."

Celtic's managing director, Fergus McCann, said the club's overall "plan of action" had not changed. Chris Waddie is hoping Falkirk go on to lift the Scottish Cup following their shock semi-final victory over Celtic.

Waddie joined the Scottish First Division outfit last September on a match-by-match basis to help him build up his

fitness. And the 36-year-old former England winger, who made four appearances and scored on his debut against Clydebank, was delighted to hear that the Bairs had reached their first final in 40 years. "I'm very pleased for them," Waddie said. "It's a great achievement for them to beat Celtic and hopefully they can go on and win the cup."

Waddie joined Bradford after his brief stint in Scotland and is now back in the Premiership bidding to steer Sunderland clear of relegation. But he has happy memories of his brief spell in Scotland and wishes he could be

at Ibrox on 24 May for the final when Falkirk meet Kilmarnock.

"I go on holiday to America on the day of the final so I won't be able to go to it but I would definitely have gone otherwise," he said. "I might still be able to watch the game on satellite over there and it would be nice to see them win it."

"I was recovering from an injury at the time when I went up there. They did me a favour and I did them a favour. I enjoyed my time there and I still speak to people at the club. They're a great set of players there and the chairman [George Fultson] is a real character."

Bath move for Regan

Rugby Union
CHRIS HEWITT

Bristol's rapidly diminishing reputation as one of the cornerstones of English rugby could suffer another sickening blow before the end of the season if Mark Regan, their home-grown Lions hooker, agrees terms with neighbours Bath. Sources close to both clubs indicated yesterday that the Courage champions were fast closing in on the most improved front-row forward in Europe.

With Leicester emerging as favourites to secure the services of a second Bristol Lion, the lock Simon Shaw, fears of a new outbreak of asset-stripping at the Memorial Ground gathered pace. Unlike Regan, who has another year left to run on his contract and would therefore be the subject of a substantial transfer fee, Shaw becomes a free agent next month.

Both men will definitely leave Bristol if the worst comes to the worst and the club fails to survive next month's play-off double-header against either Coventry or, more likely, Bedford. Under those circumstances, they might lose Martin Conn, their captain, into the bargain. His CV has been circulated to the richer and more secure top-flight clubs in recent weeks and a strong showing on this summer's England tour of Argentina could prove a stampede for his services.

However, the West Countrymen are confident of retaining elite status and, in a declaration of serious intent, have successfully negotiated a new three-year deal with David Corkery, the Irish international flanker.

Andy Gomarsall has recovered from a groin infection and replaces Martin Wood at scrum-half as Wasps attempt to tie up the championship at Northampton tomorrow.

Holt's win fails to halt the rot

Table tennis

Andrea Holt proved England's only winner as the women's team were beaten 3-1 by Lithuania in their opening match at the World Championships in Manchester yesterday.

This was a crucial Category One match for England, and one they had expected to win, but Lisa Lomas, playing in her eighth World Championship, was beaten in both her singles matches.

Lomas lost the opening match to Jolanta Prusiene after leading 20-18 in the second game. Holt then brought the scores level, by beating Ruta Garbaskaitė, but the reigning England champion, Nicola Deaton, was narrowly defeated by Kristina Tjulaitė before Lomas fell to Garbaskaitė. Results, Digest, page 29

Betts set for Wigan

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

The Great Britain forward Denis Betts is expected to rejoin Wigan on a four-year contract, now that he has confirmed he will return to England next year.

Betts said he was leaving the Auckland Warriors after three seasons for family reasons, but with some regrets. "After a trying time at the start, I'm enjoying myself now," he said.

His return to Britain, as a free agent, was bound to interest a number of clubs. Leeds expressed an interest, but said Betts appeared to be out of their price range. Wigan plan to announce his capture next month, before a shareholders' meeting at which a disgruntled group will try to vote the club's chairman, Jack Robinson, off the board. The Wigan prop Terry O'Connor has said a fourth de-

Downloading from the Internet without ISDN?

Here's something to pass the time.

Fig. 6. The principles of Ball Juggling.

ISDN is up to four times quicker than an ordinary phone line. Call BT Businessconnections on Freephone 0800 800 800.

Freezone 0800 800 800 BT

Freephone 0800 800 800 e-mail: worksmore@bt.com, 1.gw@bt.com

مكتبة من الأناضول

United we fall

Where now for the defeated Red Devils, asks Glenn Moore, page 28

sport

Spanish Open
Andy Farrell tracks the
golfing elite, page 26

Juninho wants Pele and Zico at Wembley

Football

Juninho, the Brazilian who has done so much to get Middlesbrough to the FA Cup final, hopes to be watched at Wembley by two illustrious compatriots.

"Zico and Pele were great heroes for me and I want to invite them to come and watch me in the Cup final if it's possible," he said. "It would make it even more special for me to walk out at Wembley knowing they were there. It would be wonderful for me and also for Emerson."

Boro's opponents at Wembley, Chelsea, are hoping to add another expatriate to their burgeoning enclave. Earlier this week, Ruud Gullit signed the Nigerian defender Celestine Babayaro from Anderlecht, and he may add Gustavo Poyet, a Uruguayan international with dual Spanish nationality, to his foreign complement. The hard-working midfielder, who is just as comfortable in an attacking role, can leave Real Zaragoza on a "Bosman" free transfer.

Wimbledon have been warned that if they leave England, they are unlikely ever to

be allowed to compete in European club competition.

The club's owner, Sam Hamman, has not completely given up on the idea of moving the Selhurst Park tenants to Dublin, where the Irish would flock to watch Premiership football. The team still has an outside chance of competing in the Uefa Cup, and although Europe's governing body has yet to make an official ruling, they are reluctant to sanction an English club playing home games in a different country.

A Uefa spokesman, Fritz Ahlstrom, said that when

Galatasaray attracted massive crowds to games played in Germany when they were banned from playing at home, they to play other European games there but were not allowed to. "No decision has been made about Wimbledon if they were in Dublin but you can imagine that it would be the same reply as Galatasaray received," he said.

A Wimbledon spokesman said there was no point in commenting until Uefa had notified of any ruling regarding a move to Dublin. "Until then, we refuse to accept that the scheme is dead," he said.

Derby have escaped the possibility of having points deducted by the Premier League thanks to an observant supporter.

Jim Smith, the Derby manager, was in breach of regulations when he named four non-European Union players in his 16 to play in Wednesday's Premiership match against Nottingham Forest. Three can be selected and only the fact that the blunder was spotted by the fan minutes before the kick-off saved Derby from embarrassment and possible punishment. It meant Smith had to alter

his side and team sheet 15 minutes before the start, and he replaced his Estonian goalkeeper, Mart Poom, with Russell Hoult.

Smith admitted that it was only when a told the first-team coach, Steve McClaren, that he became aware of the blunder. "The referee [Graham Poll] said he would have to report us to the Premier League because we had given him the change on the team sheet after the permitted time but I don't think it will be a problem."

"I don't know who the supporter was but I'd like to thank him. It was a good job Russell

Hoult was ready and hadn't had a couple of pints after thinking he wasn't going to be involved."

The brewers Boddingtons had to pull the plug on an advertising campaign which congratulated Manchester United on winning their European Cup semi-final. So confident were they that United would win that they invested more than £40,000 in advertisements congratulating them, which would have appeared in newspapers yesterday morning.

Late-night telephone calls had to be made to have the adverts withdrawn after United's

defeat. The ads featured a pint of the beer, known as the "cream of Manchester", with a Dortmund pennant and the slogan "Creamed".

Bryan Hamilton is calling on young players after losing three more of his Northern Ireland squad for next Wednesday's Group Nine World Cup qualifier in Armenia. With the senior players unavailable, Hamilton has brought in Manchester City's teenage midfielder, Jeff Whitley, the Ipswich midfielder, Danny Sonner, and the teenage Wigan goalkeeper, Roy Carroll.

England left with the crumbs at top table



Nicola Deaton, the reigning England champion, falls to a narrow defeat by the Lithuanian Kristina Titielaite on the opening day of the World Table Tennis Championships in Manchester's G-Mex Centre yesterday. It was a poor day for the

host nation's women's team, who lost their Category One match 3-1 before facing the stronger South Koreans. In Category Two, Scotland, Ireland and Wales all won their opening men's matches. Report, page 28; results, page 29. Photograph: Allsport

Head blow ends Morris' career best

Cricket round-up
ADAM SZRETER

The former Glamorgan captain Hugh Morris hit a career-best 233 against Warwickshire at Cardiff yesterday but was then taken to hospital after being struck by an Allan Donald bouncer.

Morris ducked into a ball from the South African and immediately fell to the ground, but he was able to remove his helmet unaided before help arrived in the shape of the Glamorgan physiotherapist, Dean Conway, and his Warwickshire counterpart, Stewart Nottingham. Morris was carried from the field on a stretcher and he later described himself as being "just a bit dazed" but was taken to hospital for a precautionary X-ray.

Thanks largely to Morris, however, Glamorgan declared at 551 for 3, their highest score against a first-class team since the 1960s. The Warwickshire, with a lead of 400 and with Warwickshire failing to claim a single bonus point in a properly contested first-innings sequence since the system was introduced in 1968.

Morris's 200 came in 529 minutes off 419 deliveries and included a six and 28 fours. He put on 242 for the third wicket with Adrian Dale, who made 106. Warwickshire finished the day on 15 for 1, needing a further 385 to avoid an innings defeat.

Neil Taylor marked his Sussex debut with a century as the hosts established the upper hand over Northamptonshire at Hove. Taylor's 127 helped Sussex, replying to Northamptonshire's 315, reach 344 for 6 and Keith Newell also played a major role compiling an undefeated 91.

Taylor's hundred made the 37-year-old former Kent captain the first Sussex player to score a century on his debut for 50 years. Hugh Bartlett achieved the feat against Cambridge University at Worthing. Earlier, Mark Robinson finished with 6 for 78 against his former club as Northamptonshire, resuming on 288 for 9, reached 315 to claim a third batting point.

At Old Trafford David Boon provided Durham's solitary resistance to frustrate Lancashire's attempt to enforce the follow-on. The Australian finished unbeaten on 85 to steer his side to 201 for 6 at the close, still seeking a further 156 to avoid the follow-on after ending Lancashire's innings on 506 earlier in the day.

Mark Bowen produced a devastating morning burst to spark off a determined Nottinghamshire fightback against Worcestershire at Trent Bridge. The Warwickshire, with a lead of 400 and with Warwickshire failing to claim a single bonus point in a properly contested first-innings sequence since the system was introduced in 1968.

The Nottinghamshire openers, Paul Pollard and Tim Robinson, continued the good work by laying the platform for a solid reply with a stand of 173, but the hosts finished the day on 196 for 3.

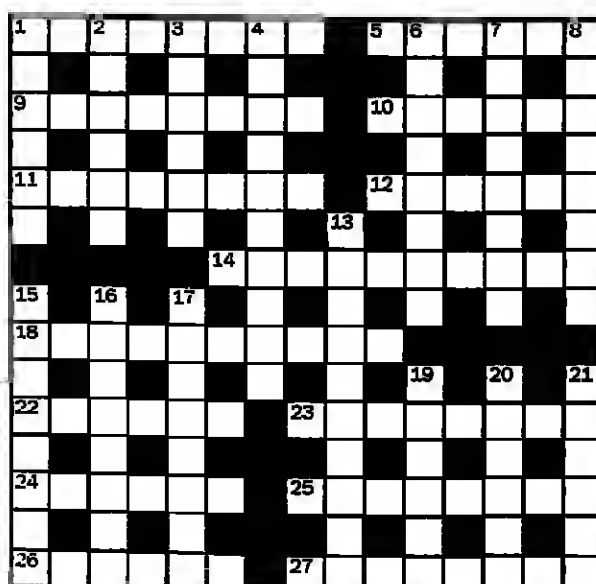
Yorkshire's batsmen again enjoyed themselves at The Fairs on the second day of the match with Oxford University. After dismissing the Dark Blues for 114 to lead by 221, David Byas did not enforce the follow-on. His decision was vindicated by Michael Vaughan and Bradley Parker who put on 230 for the second wicket, each making centuries.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 3282, Friday 25 April

By Phil

Monday's Solution



ACROSS
1 Instrument is confiscated by mum fairly promptly (8)
5 Civilised prohibition on entering river (6)
9 Getting on? Getting on without hesitation, on reflection (8)
10 It's left on board games (6)
11 and 12 Who'd produce a misplaced "I'd vet car brakes"? (4,4,6)
14 Has almost crashed in Verona, coming from German city (10)
18 Worthless type that is about to embrace unfashionable dress designer (10)
22 33 Receiving dues or laying out money? (6,3,5)
24 Be a success, I see, though dwelling in middle of garret (6)

DOWN
1 Unwilling to accept a couple of books in a tatty state (6)
2 Travelling far, I see: Australia and another continent (6)
3 and 17 Content with some company figures? See next page (6,4,4)
4 Ship: bringer of gifts and maiden song (5,5)
6 and 19 Gave news of Parliament without using quotes? (8,6)

7 See you - you finally finished rising into the atmosphere (2,6)
8 Sanctify Cockney woman - her sin is corrected (8)
13 Legal building providing study programme which involves you? (10)
15 Glittering growth to cover top of factory (3,5)
16 Frank is under an obligation in a traveller's shop (4,4)
17 See 3 down
19 See 6 down
20 Servant working under car (6)
21 Drastic cut's only first of economies (6)

White the whirlwind running out of puff

Snooker
GUY HODGSON

It was not difficult to envisage the passing of an era. The nation, or the snooker-watching part of it, has suffered with Jimmy White for so long that each April he is as much a part of the furniture as Dad's favourite chair. Old ladies see him as the lovable rascal, happy to overlook his indiscretions, boys of all ages empathise with a man whose free spirit refuses to be reined by conformity. Even his hair job, to hide a rapidly widening bald patch, was seen a welcome hint of vanity from someone whose appearance frequently reminded one of the face you see in the mirror the morning after the night before.

Jimmy, in snooker terms, means only one person: "the Whirlwind", whose failure to clinch the Embassy World Championship from six finals has made him the most popular player in the land. The country admires Stephen Hendry and Steve Davies; it adores White.

But maybe for not much longer. White, 34, went out of the World Championship just before midnight on Wednesday and into the limbo land known as outside the world's top 16. Next season his progress will be through a minefield of extra qualification matches. Young

players will be waiting to take pots at an erstwhile hero.

The words after his 10-9 defeat were familiar. "The reason I took up snooker was Jimmy," Anthony Hamilton, his conqueror, said. "I think I'd rather have beaten anyone but him." Almost everyone adheres to this ritual, except the sentiments, although genuinely felt, are coming more often these days. And earlier in tournaments.

White lost his first 11 matches this season and his earnings for 1996-97 are little more than £60,000, which represents a fortune for most but a severe decline of income for someone who has picked up £3.3m in his career. "He'll come straight back," Hamilton insisted. "He's different class."

Others are not so sure. White had been 5-1 and 8-4 in front against Hamilton and although he has been buried by an avalanche of lost frames before - most notably when he lost 10 in a row against Hendry in the 1992 world final - he has not surrendered such an advantage very often at the Crucible.

Certainly not as slowly. The last few frames were played at a ponderous pace, each shot weighed down with tension. Thirty-eight minutes for the 16th frame, 30 for the next, 44 and 28 for the final two.

In times gone by, White has rattled off four frames in the

time it was taking to complete one. The last was a particular agony, an amalgamation of missed pots and snookers. White was 37-1 up at one stage but succumbed to a break of 84. "I'm shocked," he said. "My form in practice could not have been better leading up to the championships and although I knew how good Anthony was I felt I had enough ammunition to see him off."

"I still love the game so there won't be panic stations. I'll have to cut my holidays short this year to get in some practice. I'll be back. I've had so much support from my fans over the years I owe it to them."

James Wattana, the 12th seed, had enough ammunition but was scraping around for shells before beating Graeme Dott in another final frame match. Ahead 6-2, the Thai lost all semblance of rhythm and one point trailed 8-7. "I got angry with myself for letting him off the hook," he said. "He played better than me but I was the lucky one."

Never more so than in the deciding frame when Dott, a 19-year-old Scot, potted a long red only for a double kiss to halt his progress. The white was nesting on a red in such a manner that neither the black or the pink were visible. Snookered, Dott lost his chance and Wattana sneaked through.

Results, Digest, page 29

©Published by Newspaper Publishing PLC, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, and printed by Mirror Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford
Back issues available from Historic Newspapers, 01988 840370.
Friday 25 April 1997 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

COMPUTING FAXING COPYING INNOVATING IMAGING

The Canon MultiPASS™

can print,
can fax, can copy,
can scan.

The new MultiPASS™ C30
and MultiPASS™ 10 from
Canon. They'll meet your
every business require-
ment. Compact and so
easy to use. Just call
freephone 0500 550 111.

YOU AND CANON CAN.

Canon

هكذا من الأصل